

*Manon. D. Grey.*  
*Auckland Public*  
*Libraries.*

# New Zealand Libraries

A SURVEY OF CONDITIONS AND SUG:  
GESTIONS FOR THEIR IMPROVEMENT

By

RALPH MUNN

Director, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

and

JOHN BARR

Chief Librarian, Auckland Public Libraries

*Prepared under the Auspices of the Carnegie Corporation  
of New York*



LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND

CHRISTCHURCH

1934

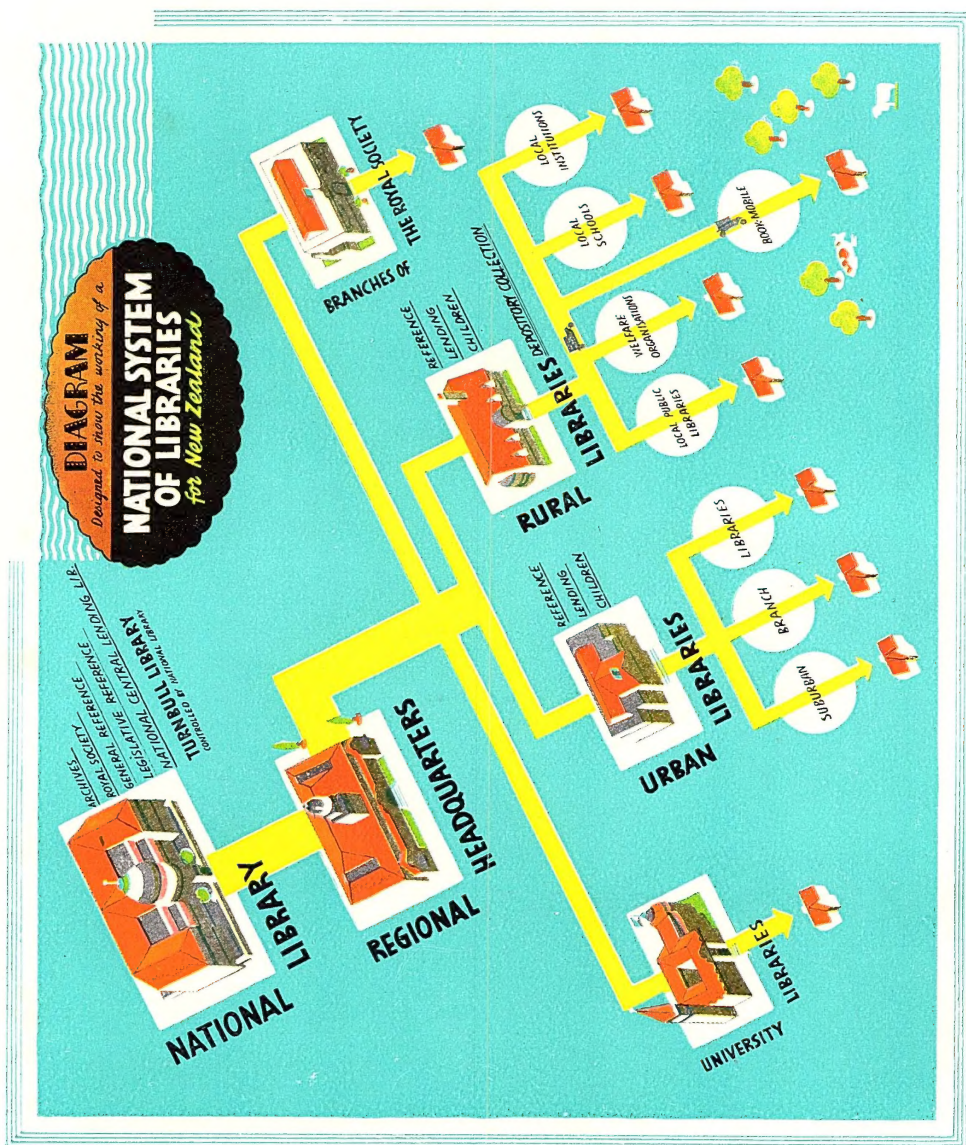
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## FOREWORD

Through travel abroad and the study of foreign library reports, the members of the Libraries Association of New Zealand realized that library development in New Zealand has not kept pace with that in Great Britain, the United States, and other parts of the world.

The Association therefore requested the Carnegie Corporation of New York to make a survey of all types of libraries in New Zealand, appraising their present activities and suggesting lines of development.

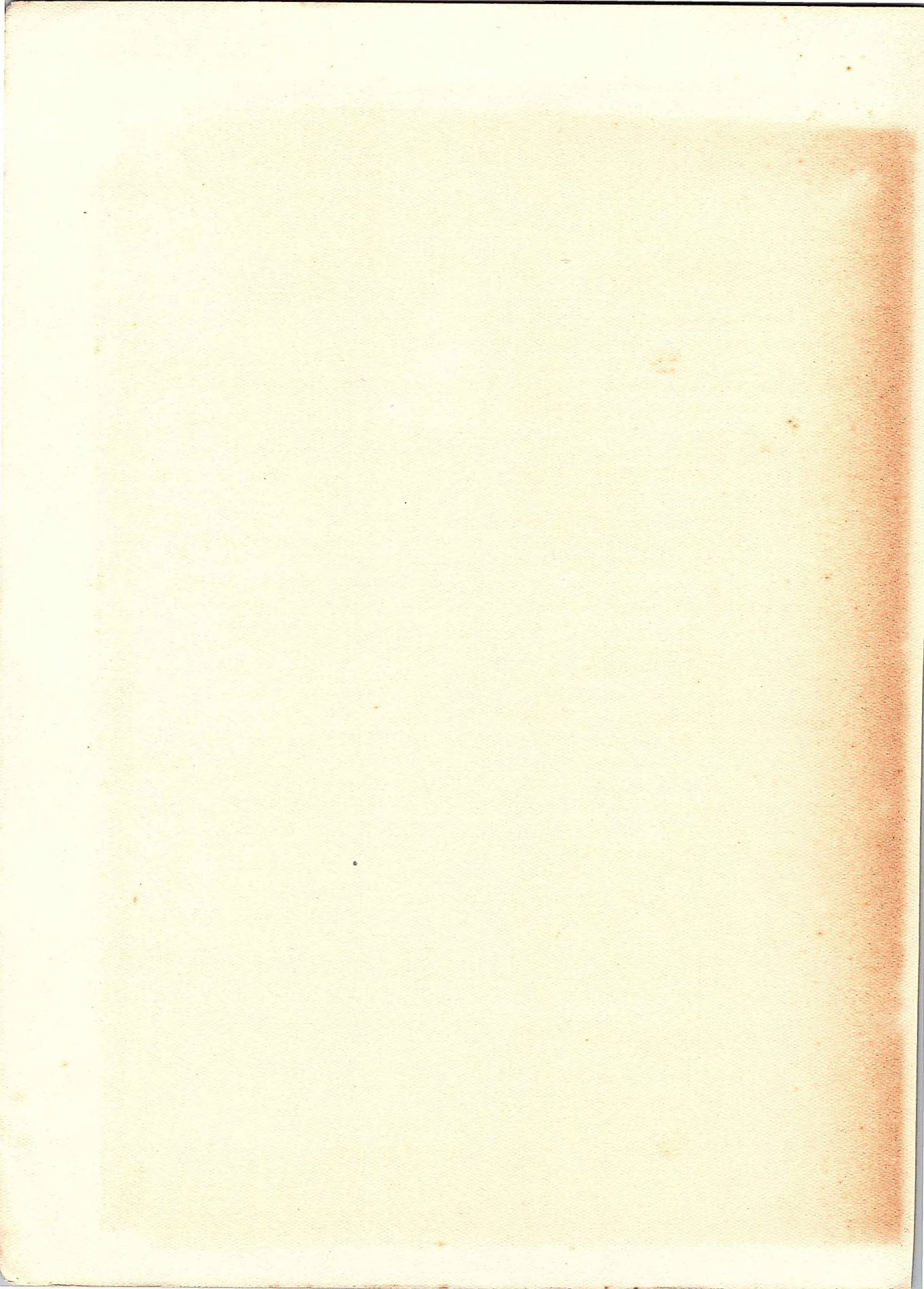
This request was granted by the Carnegie Corporation which named as its representative Mr. Ralph Munn, director (chief librarian) of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. Mr. Munn chose as his local associate Mr. John Barr, chief librarian of the Auckland Public Libraries.

The present Report represents the joint work of these two librarians who are in full agreement upon all of the recommendations.

The factual elements of the survey were obtained through a questionnaire which was sent to every public library on record in New Zealand, and by a tour of inspection by Mr. Munn and Mr. Barr. They visited all cities of over 10,000 inhabitants except Nelson, all university college libraries except Lincoln College, and a representative group of borough, school, and special libraries.

The writers wish to thank most heartily the many government officials, library committees and librarians who co-operated so splendidly in securing facts and opinions. It is quite impossible to name these people individually, but special reference must be made to Mr. T. D. H. Hall, Clerk of the House of Representatives, who gave his time so generously. Without his counsel the writers could not have arrived at the plan for a national system of libraries which is outlined in another section of the Report.







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## A MESSAGE ABOUT BOOKS

FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND,  
LORD BLEDISLOE, P.C., G.C.M.G., K.B.E.

Good literature is one of the greatest boons with which mankind has been blest. The cultural progress of a nation can be judged largely by its assimilation of it, and this in turn, under modern conditions, depends mainly upon the public libraries, their energetic administration and the adequate supply of good books of every description.

To render good books available to every intelligent inhabitant (young and old) within its area should be the objective of the modern public library.

New Zealanders are credited with being insatiable readers, but a doubt has been raised by those who have studied the matter whether the kind of reading usual in the Dominion is altogether of the right description. Moreover, it is generally admitted that among New Zealanders there is less reading of books in the country than in the towns, not because there is a lack of desire among the rural population but because the facilities for gratifying it are wanting.

Enlightened opinion is agreed that in all progressive communities where a generous measure of education has been imparted to young people libraries should be available and properly equipped so as to enable them, after the school years are over, to utilize and develop what they have learned and thus justify their educational grounding and avoid intellectual atrophy.

The library systems of older and larger countries, such as Great Britain and the United States, offer interesting fields for study. The experience of the Old Country during the last fourteen or fifteen years is especially significant and instructive. In that period a great expansion of library activity has taken place. The urban systems have been greatly improved, but of even greater importance has been the establishment, through the generous enterprise of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust (of which I am proud to be a member), of rural services through the county system of libraries which has provided reading facilities for residents in the country no matter how far away they may be living from populous centres. The crowning effort of the public library movement in England was the foundation of a National Central Lending Library by means of which the whole of the library activities of the country have been unified and co-ordinated.

If the Commission appointed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to report on New Zealand libraries can prepare a practical working plan of library development for the Dominion on lines analogous to the English national system it would confer lasting benefits upon the whole community from every point of view—social, cultural and economic.

The Commissioners will without doubt and in the light of the experience of other countries consider especially the needs of the country folk, particularly the children and adolescents. Not only do they need books which will help them in promoting the efficiency, and vitalizing the interest, of their daily work but also for the purpose of personal culture and recreation. The student, too, should be kept in mind. And the man in the street should not be neglected. Every one needs the help, inspiration and consolation which books are perennially capable of supplying.

BLREDISLOE

Government House  
Auckland  
21 April, 1934



## PART ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Overseas readers of this Report should bear in mind that New Zealand has many problems which do not press so heavily upon older and more populous countries.

Located 1200 miles from Australia, its nearest neighbour, New Zealand is isolated geographically and economically. With a population of only one and a-half millions, its inhabitants are spread over two islands which contain 103,000 square miles. Although its population is no greater than that of single cities like Detroit, Glasgow, or Sydney, New Zealand has the burden of developing railroads, highways, harbours, bridges, and other primary facilities over this large area.

There are only four cities of over 50,000 inhabitants and ten secondary cities with populations of 10,000 to 30,000. About fifty per cent. of the population is classified as rural and is engaged chiefly in agricultural and pastoral pursuits. In some respects New Zealand is only slightly beyond the pioneer stage. Settled government is less than one hundred years old and most of the country's development has come within recent years. Due to a post-war "boom," the farm lands are overcapitalized and public and private debts are heavy. The economic depression beginning in 1929 was disastrous to New Zealand, bringing the collapse of prices of its primary export products.

Offsetting these disadvantages to some extent is the homogeneous character of the people, 95 per cent. of whom are of European origin, chiefly British. There is no language problem, and there is almost no illiteracy. High standards of living prevail and there are no city slums.

Considering these facts, it is not strange that libraries in New Zealand have lagged behind the standards set in Great Britain and the United States. Public education has, however, been brought to a high state of development in New Zealand. It is therefore believed that public libraries will claim a much greater degree of popular interest and support in the future. It will no doubt be seen that it is uneconomical to spend three million pounds annually on public education, and then fail to provide the public library facilities which will permit of widespread continuing education.

These facts are stated at the beginning of this Report to show that the writers are not unmindful of the difficulties which confront New Zealand. It is not expected that the country can advance at once to the standards attained in older and larger countries. The chief purposes of the Report are (1) to call attention to present unsatisfactory conditions which can be corrected with reasonable effort and expenditure, and (2) to suggest

guiding principles of expansion for the future, so that as funds become available they may be intelligently expended to develop an integrated national library system.



The complexity of the difficult problems which by the economic stress of recent years have confronted all countries of the world has called not only for deep thought and consideration on the part of statesmen and experts, but also for intelligent study by citizens generally. Notwithstanding the marked advance of modern knowledge, many of these problems still await solution. In this connection libraries are rendering valuable assistance. It is being increasingly recognized, and my observations abroad reinforce this conviction, that libraries are not for academic purposes only, but are really the culmination of our public education system, extending it into adult life by making accessible material which in our schools the minds of the young are trained to assimilate.

RT. HON. GEORGE W. FORBES, P.C.

*Prime Minister.*





## AN OUTLINE OF LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand was discovered in 1642 by Abel Jansen Tasman, but it was not annexed to the British crown until two centuries later. After Tasman's brief visit no other European visited New Zealand until Captain Cook practically re-discovered it in 1769, and another half-century passed before the earliest settlers arrived. The first arrivals were birds of passage—whalers and sealers—but they were followed by pioneer traders and missionaries. When the British government took the colony under its care, in 1840, there were only a few hundred Europeans all told. It is of interest, therefore, to record that almost contemporaneously with the establishment of the colony the beginning of the library movement in New Zealand is to be found.

As far as can be ascertained the first place in the young colony to possess itself of library facilities was Auckland which opened a Mechanics' Institute and Library on 30th September, 1842. The building, although small, comprised a library, a reading room and a hall and it served as a community centre for nearly forty years before it was absorbed in the Auckland Public Library. Wellington followed, in 1849, with an Athenæum and Mechanics' Institute, and as other settlements were founded in both islands similar institutes were established, a few of which still exist. At Queenstown there is a collection of books which has survived the years, and the selection does honour to the literary tastes of those early days; the present day selection being insipid beside the cultural standard of the past.

Simultaneously with the establishment of the mechanics' institute libraries all over the colony, the General Assembly Library and the Provincial Council libraries were founded. The former was started at Auckland in 1856, but was transferred to Wellington in 1865 when the capital was removed thither. The period of provincial government lasted only a little over twenty years, from 1854 to 1876, and at the abolition of the provinces the libraries which had been established were handed over to the local public libraries. That these libraries were no mean collections can be seen from an examination of the volumes which have survived at Auckland and Christchurch, for they include fine editions of the classics and standard works in other subjects which are still of value and service.

The extent of library development during the first thirty-four years of the colony's history is shown in the Census of 1874. In that year there were 161 public libraries, mechanics' institutes and other literary and scientific institutions in New Zealand, but in fact, if not in name, the so-called public libraries were proprietary concerns owned and controlled by members.

Public libraries in the modern meaning of the term came into being as the result of the passing of "The Public Libraries Act, 1869." This Act, which was introduced in the House of Representatives by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Maurice O'Rorke, sought to give local authorities the same power as the Ewart Act of 1850 had conferred on English communities. At the time the Bill was brought forward no library in the colony was open freely to the public. The principal provisions of the Act were (1) Library rate not to exceed one penny in the pound, (2) Management to be vested in the local government of a district, (3) Admission to libraries to be free. Further Acts were passed in 1875 and 1877, the whole being consolidated in "The Libraries and Mechanics' Institutes Act" of 1908 and the "Municipal Corporations Act" of the same year, and again in 1920 without any material alteration. "The Counties Act, 1920," gives library powers to counties similar to those given by the Municipal Corporations Act to boroughs.

English influences can be readily traced in the library legislation of New Zealand, and it is to be hoped that the abolition of the statutory limitation of the penny rate in English law will soon be followed in New Zealand. The library law of New Zealand is in need of drastic revision.

The first community to adopt the Libraries Act of 1869 was Auckland which took over the Mechanics' Institute in 1879 and renamed it the Auckland Free Public Library. In similar fashion many of the public libraries of the Dominion have come into being. In other instances libraries came into existence through special legislation. The Canterbury Public Library, Christchurch, for example, is governed by the Canterbury University College. The trend of administration is, however, towards the local government, the trustee-controlled libraries giving place to local authority control.

The public libraries of New Zealand in 1926, the year of the last Census, number over four hundred and range from small collections of a hundred volumes to libraries such as those in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Timaru, which can stand comparison with libraries of towns in England of similar population.

Considerable progress has been made in the larger libraries during the last quarter of a century, despite the crippling effects of the rate limitation. These libraries have the departments usually found in English libraries, namely reference, lending and children's departments and news-rooms. Special collections are also to be found, such as the New Zealand Section in Dunedin, the Commercial Library at Wellington and the Music Section at Auckland. School libraries have also been established at a number of places, and classroom collections are lent to the schools by the public libraries of Wellington, Auckland, Dunedin, and a few others. Extension work is undertaken only to a small degree, story hours for children,



instruction to older pupils in the use of the library, and lectures being the limit of this part of library activity.

Improved technical processes are gradually being introduced. The Dewey Decimal Classification is used in all the larger libraries and the catalogue generally follows the card form, the dictionary arrangement based on Cutter and the Joint Rules being the most usual.

The small libraries, most of which are operated with voluntary workers, are not in a happy way. The organization and administration range from elementary down to primitive. They seek to maintain a lending department, and to qualify for the government grant which was formerly given they maintain a reading room. Children's sections, if they exist, are negligible and the reference sections count for little. Open access is universal throughout.

With a few exceptions a subscription is charged for borrowing books; the exceptions are generally libraries which have received Carnegie grants.

Generosity to the larger libraries has not been lacking in New Zealand, and gifts of considerable value have been made. Among many donors mention should be made of Alexander Turnbull (Wellington), Sir George Grey, Henry Shaw and the Leys family (Auckland), T. M. Hocken and Robert McNab (Dunedin), and Miss Alexander (Wanganui).

As a summary of the growth of libraries in New Zealand the following statistics taken from the Census of 1874 and 1926 are useful.

Year	Population (excluding Maoris)	No. of Libraries	No. of Volumes
1874	299,514	161	98,039
1926	1,344,469	435	1,266,892 <sup>1</sup>

In addition to the public libraries, those of the university colleges should be mentioned even in a brief outline of New Zealand's library development. The University of Otago was established in 1869 and for some time remained independent of the University of New Zealand which was founded a year later. The University of New Zealand consists of affiliated colleges situated in the four centres with special (agricultural) colleges at Palmerston North and Lincoln. All of these colleges have libraries which are dealt with more fully in another section. It is sufficient to state here that the libraries have had a slow development which is now happily being accelerated.

The only other libraries of moment in New Zealand are the scientific libraries which form part of the Royal Society of New Zealand and its branches. These libraries, though small, have filled a want in the require-

<sup>1</sup> Public libraries only; the 1874 figures include libraries of institutes of a quasi-public character.

ments of scientific workers. The library of the parent body in Wellington is easily the most important of its kind in the country, but it needs considerable help in quarters, equipment and reorganization to function efficiently.

"The Libraries Association of New Zealand" was formed in 1910 with a constitution based on that of the Library Association (London). It holds occasional conferences and prints Proceedings. Its membership is small and its funds so limited that it cannot function as its members would like to see it. There is scope for a strong association to realize the objects for which it was formed.

In this statement it is apparent that the libraries of New Zealand were founded on British ideals and have been inspired by British methods. The ideals were at first responsible for some good beginnings, but the inspiration has not persisted. No great effort has been made to follow the lead which England gave in 1919 when the Libraries Act was amended, allowing communities complete freedom in deciding what rate they should impose for library purposes in urban areas, or for the establishment of rural libraries through the county system, although these are precisely what New Zealand requires at the present time. The library systems of the larger towns need increased financial resources if they are to grow as their English prototypes have developed, and become a strong factor in the cultural life of their communities. The small libraries of New Zealand would be improved immeasurably if they adopted the English system of mutually combining their resources to secure a satisfactory service for rural communities. The development of the English county library system is the most significant feature of library development in recent times. Since its inception less than a quarter of a century ago, it has been the means of providing residents in the country, who previously had no public library service, with facilities which are comparable with those of residents in large cities. The public library system of England and Wales, through its urban and rural libraries, provides a public book service for 97 per cent. of the entire population of the country. Scotland and Ireland have also improved their library systems on similar lines to England with equally satisfactory results.

The spirit of the New Zealand pioneers with its stress on cultural development should not be allowed to lapse, and it need not if New Zealanders will only renew the faith in British ideals which their pioneer fathers respected so much.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw in his recent visit to Christchurch gave utterance to this thought when he said that the old traditions of public action and spirit must be retained, and the country must ensure that the level of culture does not drop and that the son and grandson of the settler are more cultured than their ancestor.



If the libraries of the Dominion are developed in this spirit the torch of culture will be carried forward.

The following is a brief summary of library legislation in New Zealand at the present time.

The principal Act governing libraries in New Zealand is "The Libraries and Mechanics' Institutes Act, 1908." It is divided into two parts, Part I dealing with Public Libraries managed by Local Authorities, and Part II with Public Libraries and Mechanics' Institutes managed by Trustees. Part I of the Act provides for the establishment of a library by a county, a road district or a town district, *but does not include a borough*. It limits, in Part I, the rate which may be levied for the maintenance of the library to a sum not exceeding one penny in the pound. Section 12 states "The public shall be admitted to all libraries established under this part of this Act free of all charge." Despite this provision it has been customary in practically all libraries, except those erected by a Carnegie grant to charge a sum of money, generally about ten shillings a year, for the privilege of borrowing books. This procedure may have arisen from the fact that the original Public Libraries Act of 1869 did not envisage book borrowing from public libraries, and when lending departments were instituted in later years it was deemed advisable to make a charge for lending books for home reading. The libraries established under Part II of this Act are in reality mechanics' institutes and the Act implied the need for providing subscriptions for book borrowing privileges.

"The Municipal Corporations Act, 1920," is the main Act under which libraries are controlled in boroughs. It was first enacted in 1908 and is now consolidated in the 1920 enactment. The section relating to public libraries is numbered 302 and deals with Public Recreation and Instruction and empowers Councils to provide libraries among other things. Sub-section (d) reads—"If it thinks fit the Council may fix reasonable charges to be paid to the District Fund for the use of any such land or buildings, subject, however, in the case of a library to the following provisions, that is to say (1) In the case of a library supported or partly supported by means of a rate, admission thereto shall be open to the public free of all charge; but (2) The Council may by by-law make charges for lending books out of any library under its control." Section 91 of this Act allows the levying of a rate not exceeding one penny in the pound.

In a similar way counties are enabled by means of the "Counties Act, 1920," (Section 198, sub-section 1) to "apply any portion of the County Fund for the purpose of acquiring, erecting, establishing, and maintaining or otherwise aiding athenæums, mechanics' institutes, museums, public halls, mortuaries, and public libraries situated within the geographical boundaries of the county (whether forming part of the county or not) and not conducted for the purpose of private profit."





In these times we are confronted by many practical problems, the ultimate solution of which is not yet apparent. Whatever may result there is no doubt that as a country and as a generation we have on our hands an increase in leisure time. This fact in itself raises problems, but without discussing them at length it is proper to draw attention to the connection between the fruitful employment of that leisure time and such institutions as libraries, art galleries, and museums, using them not, indeed, as a way of escape from work and real life, but as means by which we may enrich our life and work.

RT. HON. JOSEPH GORDON COATES, P.C.

*Minister of Finance, Etc.*





## LIBRARY CONDITIONS OF TO-DAY

**T**he free public library as it exists in Great Britain and the United States is almost unknown in New Zealand. With rare exceptions, public libraries here are subscription libraries with borrowing privileges limited to members. Fees vary greatly, the average annual charge being about ten shillings for the privilege of borrowing one volume and one magazine at a time. The fee for children is frequently less, and in some cases it is as low as one shilling a year.

To qualify as a public institution for the receipt of municipal rates or grants, public libraries always provide a free reading room which, with the exception of the larger libraries, usually contains only a selection of newspapers and a few out-of-date popular periodicals. An atmosphere of cheerless charity usually pervades these rooms. They are severely set aside from the other parts of the building which are sometimes conspicuously labelled "Strictly For Members Only." Libraries are also compelled by law to open their reference collections to the general public. In the larger cities, and an occasional smaller one, this is of real value to the community.

This subscription basis of service is perhaps the greatest weakness of New Zealand public libraries. In an age when widespread popular education is conceded to be the foundation of democratic society, these libraries are restricting their lending services to those who pay a fee.

It is argued that anyone who is really interested in reading can easily afford to pay a fee of ten shillings per annum; but the fact remains that no New Zealand library, with the exception of Timaru—which it should be noted has a free lending service—approaches such high records of use as are common among free libraries in other countries. It is also unwise to restrict the use of any service which is as educational as libraries to those whose initial interest is strong enough to induce them to pay directly for it. The experience of England, the United States and Canada is that many people whose reading interest is quite latent would be attracted to a free service and would develop good reading habits.

The quality of reading is also affected adversely by the subscription basis. The library must attract the largest possible number of subscribers because it needs their fees. With a few exceptions this is accomplished by offering the lightest and most exciting novels, almost to the exclusion of books of greater merit. In many of the smaller libraries novels comprise 95 per cent. of the book stock. If the library were supported entirely from rates the librarian would be free to cater for all interests. The number of readers might be reduced temporarily by this policy, but it would no doubt eventually result in a much wider interest and use of the library just as in other countries.

Membership fees are never sufficient to maintain a well-developed service, and wherever a library is worthy of the name it is found that a high percentage of its cost is met from public funds.

In Auckland the library receives about £10,000 from local rates and approximately £3,000 from membership fees.<sup>1</sup> Thus the city is paying more than two-thirds of the cost, and through failure to pay the additional one-third it is losing the full advantage of its own investment. If the library were made free its use would no doubt be enormously increased and the quality of reading would be greatly improved. The fact should be faced, however, that a free system which would greatly increase the use of the library would require a total expenditure proportionately larger than that now made.

One disastrous result of the subscription plan is that public libraries are not generally accepted as a natural and necessary part of the public educational plan. As they exist to-day, most of the libraries have little claim to such a position. Indeed many of them are little more than groups of subscribers who receive public funds to aid them in purchasing light and pleasant reading matter for themselves.

The four large cities and a few of the secondary cities are making an honest effort to give some service to children. There is no New Zealand librarian who has had any training in library work with children, but several of them show a natural aptitude for it. The Remuera branch, Auckland, Newtown branch in Wellington, and the Canterbury Public Library, Christchurch, all contain children's rooms which do not suffer by comparison with overseas collections. Timaru and Wanganui are smaller communities with creditable service for children.

Too frequently, however, there is no effort made to serve the children, or the attempt is so feeble that it deserves no credit. Cities as large as New Plymouth, Napier, Gisborne and Hamilton can claim no more than a gesture towards work with children.

This failure to grasp the importance of service to children seriously detracts from the value of New Zealand libraries. It is only by instilling good reading habits in children that a permanent appreciation of books is likely to be developed. The answer that children's reading is cared for in the schools is not sufficient. Most of the school libraries as they exist to-day would repel rather than attract the normal child. (The classroom libraries supplied by the public library authority at Wellington, Auckland and Dunedin are notable exceptions.) In any event, there is a certain freedom, a lack of compulsion, which is characteristic of the public library and which is seldom achieved in the school.

<sup>1</sup> 1932-33 figures. Owing to the depression the Library rate was reduced to  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in 1933-34 and the same rate has been struck for 1934-35.



Library committees are urged to give far greater attention to children's service not only for its own value, but from the purely selfish motive of gaining greater interest and support for their libraries. Adults who have no library interest on their own account will respond at once to any agency which is contributing to the welfare of their children.

Wellington, and Christchurch to a lesser degree, appear to be the only cities in which classes from the secondary schools are regularly brought to the library for instruction in the use of catalogues, indexes and reference books. In some cases the school authorities are said to be unwilling to take the time from regular studies for this instruction. It is here suggested that the ability to find needed information with facility is one of the most important things which can be taught to any child. This instruction in the use of libraries is strongly recommended to library and school authorities alike.

The book collections of the lending departments of New Zealand libraries are not adapted to an educational and cultural purpose. Following the example of the English libraries of fifty years ago, most of the non-fiction has been placed in the reference section. As long as the subscription basis persists, this practice has the advantage of making these books available to non-members for use within the building. It is believed, however, that more would be gained by placing a much larger proportion of the non-fiction in the lending section where it would be available for home use.

Lending sections originally contained almost nothing but novels, and this is still true in many of the smaller libraries. The first step toward recognizing non-fiction as lending material was to stock the most popular titles of travel and biography. Even to-day, it is only in the largest libraries that a fair representation of science, sociology, economics, history and the literary forms is found in the lending sections. Proof that readers will respond to good non-fiction was found by the larger libraries in the greatly increased use of books dealing with the economic depression.

Book stocks are much too small in almost every case, and should be increased as conditions permit. Book selection is difficult, particularly in the smaller cities, due to the lack of suitable selective guides. Complete dependence upon the local bookseller frequently works to the disadvantage of the library.

#### PUBLIC LIBRARY PERSONNEL

The Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin public libraries have been controlled in recent years by librarians who had been trained in British libraries. The Wellington Public Library was developed by an untrained but adaptable librarian and has since called a man with British training. In all of these libraries the staffs have received such instruction as the librarian could pass on through the apprentice system. The Auckland and

Wellington staffs have also shown some interest in following the instruction offered by the Library Association (London) Professional Examinations. These staffs are not seriously lacking in matters of everyday technique, but from the overseas viewpoint they are deficient in higher education and the wider implications of library work.

Auckland and Wellington have for many years required matriculation (university entrance examination) for staff appointment, but there are very few university graduates to be found in any public library. With the great bulk of the library's activities centred in the lending of fiction, this lack of wide education on the part of the staff has perhaps had less serious effects than might be thought. On the other hand, it is quite possible that more highly trained staffs would have created a greater activity along informational, educational and cultural lines. Certainly New Zealand libraries must attract a larger proportion of well educated staff members before they can develop along more serious lines, and earn the esteem and support of their communities.

It is entirely futile to demand higher education from librarians until salaries are raised appreciably. So long as senior assistants, branch librarians and cataloguers with twenty years' service are paid maximum salaries of £150 to £250 per year, they can be recruited only from among young matriculates. The Auckland and Wellington libraries are approaching the size which will permit them to establish economically a more systematic method of training their own staffs, and perhaps students from other cities. Training classes, with instruction given by the librarian and selected senior assistants, and part-time help from the local university faculties, should be developed as conditions permit. Such training classes might some day be expanded and become real library schools if New Zealand's libraries develop sufficiently to create a market for graduates.

The secondary cities are less fortunate in their librarians. Timaru, Invercargill, and Wanganui are the exceptions with librarians trained in one of the four major cities, while New Plymouth has recently appointed a former bookseller of promise. Conscientious devotion to duty and a love of the work mark practically all of the other librarians, but these attributes, admirable as they are, can hardly offset the lack of knowledge of the fundamentals of library administration.

With occasional exceptions, such as at Hawera, the librarians of the small town libraries are entirely without training. Due to low salaries this condition is almost inevitable in any country. It will be greatly aided if systems of libraries can be developed with a competent librarian administering each district, for he would provide the supervision necessary to the librarians of the small towns.

Such immediate remedies as can be applied to the widespread lack of training for librarianship are outlined in the Recommendations.

Well equipped libraries are becoming more and more indispensable in the life of every community, and the work and enthusiasm of the librarian increasingly important. There is no such thing as completing one's education. When school, college and university days are over, the education of the individual may almost be said to have just begun. The gates of knowledge have been thrown open to him, and it is largely according to the extent and soundness of the grounding in these early days, and the opportunities now available to him, that his knowledge may be increased. Apart altogether from the purely literary or cultural advantages to be gained from them, good libraries play an important part in making for increased efficiency in the community generally. No one will say that in any profession or calling the mere passing of the necessary qualifying examinations is sufficient. On the other hand, in almost every walk in life, these times demand more of the individual than can be acquired by practical experience alone. Comparatively few people have the money to establish more than a very modest library of their own, and good libraries, available to the public, are the only means of filling this serious gap.

HON. SIR CHARLES STATHAM,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives  
and Chairman of the Joint Library Com-  
mittee of the New Zealand Parliament.*





## THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF THE FOUR MAIN CENTRES

### AUCKLAND<sup>1</sup>

**T**he Auckland Public Libraries, consisting of a central library, the Leys Institute, and eight branches comprise the oldest, largest and most fully-developed library system in New Zealand. Administered during the last twenty years by a trained librarian, it has achieved technical excellence and created many of the services which mark the better city libraries of England, Canada, and the United States.

The subscription plan is the greatest fault of the Auckland Library. It seriously restricts the use which is made of the library, but it has had less effect here than in many other libraries in lowering the quality of reading. This is due to the strong stand of the librarian in refusing to cater for the lower reading tastes of subscribers, and to the generous support of an intelligent library committee.

Auckland is an outstanding example of the poor economy of the subscription plan. The city pays £10,000 in rates for the library and only about £3,000 is paid in subscriptions. The subscription fee acts as a barrier, however, to thousands of residents. Through failure to pay the additional £3,000 and make the library free to residents, the city is losing much of the value of its £10,000. If the subscription plan cannot be abolished in the immediate future, free service to children, at least, should be established as at Christchurch.<sup>2</sup> Auckland is already providing free library books in the schools and its extension to the public library is a logical step.

As in most New Zealand libraries, the reference department has developed quite separately from the lending and there is a tendency to put too many non-fiction titles in the reference section. The Auckland library has two special collections which are truly noteworthy, those bequeathed by Sir George Grey and Mr. Henry Shaw. Each one is complementary to the other and both comprise items of considerable rarity, including many illuminated manuscripts, about 100 incunabula, several Caxtons, and many other treasures. Most outstanding are the first, second and fourth folios of Shakespeare and his "Poems" of 1640. There is an excellent New Zealand history collection, and a special music library has recently been established through the generosity of a local citizen.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Munn is entirely responsible for the comments on the Auckland Public Libraries.

<sup>2</sup> Since writing this section of the Report the subscription for children has been abolished.

The library system provides a building for each 10,000 of the city's residents, or one for each 20,000 if the suburbs are included. Most of the branch buildings show excellent planning, but they are deficient in the size of the book stocks and the number of staff members. The entire system is to some extent suffering from the strain of maintaining so many branches, and no more should be established until the existing ones are better provided with books and personnel.

The staff includes a fair percentage of experienced members who have been trained by the librarian and his deputy, both of whom received training in Scottish libraries. Since about 1920, matriculation has been the minimum requirement for appointment and several members have taken instruction by correspondence from the Library Association (London). These standards are low from the overseas viewpoint, and should be increased as salaries are advanced.

The central building is badly overcrowded and relief in the near future is essential. Removal of the Art Gallery to other quarters and alteration of the entire building to meet modern library requirements should be the aim of the committee.

Leys Institute is operated independently and serves the Ponsonby district. It was founded by the late William Leys and is financed by the Leys family and fees from borrowers. Its collections are well chosen, but part of their value is lost by placing too much of the non-fiction in the reference library. The entire policy of building up a large and somewhat scholarly reference collection in this one section of Auckland is open to serious question. The same amount of money, if spent to develop a popular free library service to children and adults would perhaps be of much greater value to the city. Although there is the friendliest co-operation between Leys Institute and the Public Library there is an inevitable overlapping and waste of money and effort in having two independent libraries in the same city.

#### WELLINGTON

Except for its subscription basis, the Wellington Public Library does not suffer by comparison with many English libraries of its size. In addition to the usual activities at the Central Library it is developing a branch library system, rooms for boys and girls, and book service to the public schools.

The Central Library is well located in the heart of the city and is greatly used. The building is badly overcrowded and many books are now stored at one of the branches. The committee is making strenuous efforts to provide a new building. The City Council is in complete sympathy with the project and there is hope that a suitable modern building will be erected in the near future.



The reference department is well chosen and appears to be fairly adequate for ordinary demands. The commercial section is housed in a separate room and is being developed along modern lines.

The lending department of the Central Library shows an effort to stock a fair amount of non-fiction, but the issue of 72 per cent. fiction is high.

Work with boys and girls is carried on at the Central Library and all branches, the Newtown Branch containing one of the two best branch children's libraries in New Zealand. Wellington is fortunate in securing the co-operation of the school authorities, and every secondary school class comes to the library once each year for instruction in the use of catalogues, indexes and reference books. This is an activity which is recommended most strongly to other cities. There is also a system for supplying supplementary readers to the schools, as well as the usual type of classroom library.

Wellington is the only city in New Zealand in which the library operates its own bindery. When competent local binders are available it is not always wise for a library to establish a book-binding department, but it is perhaps significant that the condition of Wellington's books is far above the average.

The branches, except Newtown, are small and the book stocks are far below the need. Branch collections of 3,000 volumes cannot offer an adequate selection. Existing branches should be developed before others are established.

The staff is to be commended upon its interest in the Library Association (London) examinations, six members having participated last year.

#### CHRISTCHURCH

Christchurch presents the anomalous position of a city in which there are ten libraries, each entirely independent of the other, and none of them receiving any appreciable amount of financial support from public funds.

The Canterbury Public Library is owned by Canterbury University College. The College Council is the governing board and the library is financed from bequests which have been left to the College for public library purposes. In normal times about £2,000 is received from this source and the subscriptions and other receipts amount to £2,500 per annum. At present, however, the income from bequests amounts to only £400 and the miscellaneous receipts to £2,400. The Christchurch City Council makes no grant whatever to this Library.

The library building is well located and fairly adequate for present needs. The reading room is free and is unusually well provided with newspapers from abroad. Lending privileges to children are also free, this being

the only large subscription library in which this feature is found.<sup>1</sup> The children's room is attractive and fairly well stocked. The appeal of free service to children is shown by a registration of over 2,000 young people as borrowers. The lending and reference departments are fairly well developed, but the equipment is out of date. Technical processes are satisfactory. The staff is young and enthusiastic, but is not taking advantage of the training offered by the Library Association (London). One assistant is studying at the University. The librarian gives talks to the staff upon various phases of library work. The issues reach about 250,000 volumes per year from a stock of 24,000 loan books. About 80 per cent. of the issues are of fiction. The reference department has a stock of 23,000 volumes and is free to the public.

In addition to this public central library there are nine suburban libraries in various residential districts. Each library operates under a separate library board, and there is no co-ordination of work among them. The City Council makes a total grant of £700 a year which is divided among these libraries, the largest receiving about £100. Subscription fees vary, the average being about six shillings annually. The libraries are housed in separate buildings, some of which have been built or altered for the purpose. In most cases grants have been made by the City Council for building purposes.

These suburban libraries have no permanent trained staffs. They are open only on certain evenings with volunteer workers in charge. It is generally true that they contain no reference facilities, no children's departments and no books except fiction and the lighter types of general literature, mainly travel and biography. They are not catalogued. They are, in effect, nothing more than voluntary groups of neighbours who are engaged in supplying themselves with pleasant reading matter, partly at public expense.

Amalgamation of the suburban libraries with the Canterbury Public Library to form a unified system under public control and financed from local rates is essential to effective library service. The suburban libraries are commendable from the standpoint of civic interest and neighbourly co-operation, but like volunteer fire brigades they are quite inadequate to the needs of a large city.

Unification presents many difficulties, but these are not believed to be insuperable. The College Council which owns and controls the Canterbury Public Library is composed of the highest type of citizens who feel their responsibilities and hesitate to turn their properties over to the changing personnel of the City Council. It is believed, however, that patient effort can lead toward an agreement under which the libraries of Christchurch can be unified under a board of control which will represent

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written Auckland has eliminated the subscription fee for children.

all interests. The College Council is urged to consider the fact that it has no rating power and its library is entirely without the means to develop further, except as it may attract additional bequests and gifts. Legislation is probably needed to enable the College Council to transfer library bequests to a new board.

#### DUNEDIN

The Dunedin Public Library is the only one of the four large city libraries which is a free public library as that term is understood in Great Britain and the United States. Founded under a Carnegie grant in 1908, all of its services, including those of the lending department, are free to all ratepayers and residents of the city.

Unfortunately, the funds provided by the city have never been sufficient to finance the full development of the library. The City Council deserves credit for having established free service in a country in which subscription fees are still generally charged. Since it has assumed the lead in making its library free, the Council should give enough support to gain the full advantage of its free service. When judged by its appropriation per caput of population, Dunedin is less generous than Timaru, the only other sizable city which maintains a free library. Dunedin's expenditure per caput is also less than the amount per caput which the Auckland library receives from rates.

Much would be gained if the attitude of City Council members could be changed from what appears to be a sense of martyrdom because of their commitment to free service, to a realization that Dunedin is doing nothing really heroic but is simply following the lead of almost every British and American city.

The City Council is admittedly in a difficult situation. As in most other New Zealand cities, the library's lending department has developed largely as a distributing agency for fiction. It has thus been open to attack from certain blocs of ratepayers who regard it as an exclusively recreational service which should charge subscription fees. Recently the City Council wisely determined to increase the percentage of non-fiction purchases, and make the lending department exert a more educational and cultural influence in the city. Readers who found their supply of novels reduced immediately protested.

The solution lies in providing enough additional funds to build up the non-fiction without restricting the purchase of fiction. The lending collection does contain too high a percentage of novels, but it does not contain too many of them. The difficulty lies in the lack of sufficient non-fiction to balance the collection. The entire book stock, including all reference and special collections, numbers only 52,000 volumes for a city of 70,000 inhabitants.



The demand for books is so great that efforts have been made to control the growth of patronage by limiting each borrower to one book at a time, and providing that only two members of any one family may become borrowers. Dunedin's municipal finances are in a relatively sound state and it can well afford to provide a supply of good books which will more nearly meet the demand.

The reference department includes a good general collection and a notable library of New Zealand history bequeathed by the late Robert McNab. There is also a Walt Whitman collection, bequeathed by the late W. H. Trimble. The department was developed by a former librarian, W. B. McEwan, who died recently.

Additions and alterations to the building which would add greatly to the usefulness of the library can be made at relatively low cost. Extension through branch libraries should be begun as soon as possible. They are not likely, however, to relieve the pressure at the main library as is believed locally. Experience shows that branches attract an entirely new group of readers, and increase rather than decrease the work of a central library, although they may check its rate of growth.

Improvement in the technical processes may be anticipated as the new librarian is now studying library science in the United States under a Carnegie Corporation grant. It is unfortunate that other staff members have not completed secondary schooling and so cannot qualify for the examinations of the Library Association (London). Matriculation should be required of future appointees, but it will probably be necessary to pay higher salaries to attract them. Young assistants are now paid only thirty shillings per week, and experienced workers receive about £100 per annum.

The value of good public libraries cannot be overestimated; the need for education on the different subjects brought before the various Branches of the National Council of Women from time to time serves to keep this need continually before us. My Council fully appreciates the great importance of providing good general literature, realizing that what is read by the young people of to-day will play a large part in the future welfare of the Dominion.

MISS C. E. KIRK,

*Dominion President, National Council of Women.*

Knowing something of the conditions of New Zealand country life, I have no hesitation in stating that improved library facilities would be helpful to country residents, especially to women and boys and girls.

MRS. M. PATERSON,

*President, N.Z. Women's Institutes.*





## THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF THE SECONDARY CITIES

**T**he libraries of the secondary cities vary greatly. Timaru is serving its residents more adequately than any other place in New Zealand, while Napier's library would be a disgrace to any community.

Hamilton offers an excellent book collection to its adult population. Books are selected by a retired headmaster and reflect a splendid choice. Part of their value is lost, however, by putting too much of the non-fiction in the reference division. The children's section is apparently an afterthought and is in no way adequate. The building has an excellent location, but there is need for extension and re-arranging internally. The library at Frankton, now part of Hamilton, should be consolidated and run as a branch.

Gisborne's library committee is the most alert of any of those encountered. Excellent new quarters have just been opened, and the committee showed a determination to improve the book collection, establish adequate facilities for children, and improve the present meagre collection of reference works.

Deplorable conditions in Napier are in no way the result of the earthquake of 1931, except as that disaster left the city with many pressing problems. The library is poorly housed, the book collection is small, has not been well chosen and is in poor physical condition. The librarian, appointed recently, is alert and anxious to improve conditions, but without greatly increased funds she can do little.

The library at Hastings is in temporary quarters, due to the demolition of the library building during the earthquake. Although a temporary expedient, the present quarters are not unsuitable. The book collection is weak in some directions and should be developed greatly before money is spent on rebuilding. Intelligent interest is shown in the selection of children's books and some quite good reference works for young people are included. The shop windows should be used for book and poster displays which would help to make the library's facilities better known. Standard classification and cataloguing should be introduced at once before the growing collection becomes unmanageable.

Timaru is one of the very few libraries in New Zealand which are supported entirely by local rates and therefore free to all residents. It has 30 per cent. of its inhabitants enrolled as borrowers, as against an average of less than 10 per cent. among the best patronized subscription libraries. The number of books issued for home reading exceeds that in many larger cities. The book collection is well chosen and is kept in better physical con-

dition than in any other city visited. The reference section contains only books of a purely reference character and the bulk of the non-fiction is available for borrowing. Work with children is recognized as an important feature and compares favourably with similar work overseas. Although the building is overcrowded and poorly planned, Timaru is cited to library authorities of other secondary cities as the best in its class from a service standpoint.

Wanganui is notable chiefly for its new building, erected in 1933, the gift of Miss Alexander. It is a model of careful planning and economical construction, and the architect and librarian deserve acknowledgment for their work. Unfortunately the book collection does not reflect credit upon its building, but it will no doubt be improved as finances permit. Work with children receives support and is being extended. There are already some good reference books for young people and the pictures hung on the walls show an understanding of the value of a bright environment.

Palmerston North has settled its building problem in a way which will interest other secondary cities. A modern commercial building has been erected upon a site, which was owned by the city, on the main square. The library occupies the first floor, and rents from ground floor shops carry much of the cost of the building. The planning was skilfully done and the library entrance is as impressive as in a monumental type of building. The book collection is inadequate in every section—reference, lending and children's. Technical processes are also deficient, there being only a rough classification and inadequate cataloguing.

New Plymouth's library would appear to be much more creditable if it were not so seriously crowded. The lending department contains a broad and comprehensive collection of general literature as well as fiction. It is one of the best selections in any library of its size in New Zealand. Only a gesture toward children's service is possible in the present building. The reference collection is one of the poorest observed, but it cannot be greatly improved in its present small quarters which are entirely unsupervised. The collection of New Zealand literature for reference is accommodated in the Museum portion of the building upstairs and is quite representative and adequate.

Invercargill stands foremost among the secondary cities in the richness of its reference department. Its lending collection is also creditable, with a fair proportion of non-fiction titles. Children's service is not neglected and immediate improvement in new quarters is promised. Technical processes are satisfactory. The library is housed in first floor rooms with shops below. It is seriously overcrowded, with book shelves reaching from floors to ceilings. Reading space is insufficient and badly arranged. A new building is urgently needed.

Time did not permit a visit to Nelson.

## SMALL TOWN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

In general, the smaller libraries of New Zealand simply prove what has been found true in American and British communities, namely that towns of under 10,000 inhabitants cannot provide adequate library service for themselves. These smaller communities must be linked together in district systems, with centralized book purchasing and supervision as is recommended in Part II of this Report.

It would be unfair to pass over the smaller libraries without paying tribute to the unselfish devotion with which many library committees and librarians, often giving their services in an honorary capacity, are attempting to develop their institutions. In almost every case, however, they are faced with the inescapable barrier of inadequate finances. The small community simply cannot raise enough by any reasonable tax upon itself to provide a proper service independently.

Despite the impossible conditions under which the small town libraries have to operate at present it was pleasing to find here and there moderately successful efforts at library service. Hawera, for instance, provides its citizens with a fairly good collection of books and a really good selection of periodicals. The children's section is also good though small, and the same could be said of the reference section. Other places that are doing creditable work under adverse circumstances are Fairlie and Rotorua. At one or two places quite beautiful little buildings have been erected—the library at Patea being a perfect little gem of architecture. Temuka has also a good modern building. But bricks and mortar are not enough. Books and trained librarians must come first; the building when it can be afforded.

There are a few cases in which condemnation of local apathy is demanded. At Balclutha, for example, there is an attractive library building which contains the poorest excuse for a book collection which was observed. A few dirty, ragged, old books and a small section of new cheap fiction do not make a library. At Blenheim the public library has been turned over to the librarian on a contract basis, her salary coming from whatever balance there may be at the end of the year. This frankly commercial basis is indefensible. Admitting that the small town can never adequately provide for itself, there is an entirely attainable margin of improvement in many cases.



## GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY

**T**he General Assembly Library is in theory the national library of New Zealand, but its organization and administration allow it to function only as the library of New Zealand's Parliament. Founded in 1856 at Auckland it was transferred to Wellington in 1865, but it was not until 1898 that it was provided with a suitable building which it still occupies. Architecturally it is notable, being one of the few examples of Gothic in the country. It possesses a fine reading hall; but it is now inadequate in regard to book accommodation.

The book collection contains 140,000 volumes, and is strong in subjects of sociological interest—political science and economy, public administration and history, with special emphasis on New Zealand affairs. Former librarians laid the foundation of a useful New Zealand section by preserving and binding the files of many of the early Dominion newspapers. The present head of the library, although not a trained librarian, has shown indefatigable resource in the self-imposed task of assembling and arranging a vast array of historical papers and material. They will form the foundation of a good historical collection, especially strong in archives, which will one day be one of the most important sections of the Library.

The Library has never had sufficient funds for its development. The normal expenditure on books is only £700 a year, or about one-third of what is being spent in the Auckland and Wellington municipal libraries; and the staff is totally inadequate for the important work it has to do. A legislative library should be the mental laboratory for members of Parliament and for the principal officers of the Government. To accomplish the parliamentary side of its work alone would entail a larger personnel than it has at present, and additional trained assistants are essential to carry out the technical processes in classification, cataloguing and bibliography which such a library should normally perform.

The chief librarian deserves much credit for the work he has accomplished under difficulties and for the plans he has formulated for developing the archives division, and for the support he has given to the scheme for improving the legislative reference section of the Library.

It is time to settle the question of whether the General Assembly Library is to become a national library. In theory this is accepted, and the fact that since 1903 the library has received two copies of every book published in the Dominion is a tacit admission on the part of the administration of its national character. Yet it does not fulfil the requirements of a national collection, as does the British Museum or the Library of Congress, Washington.

To do this satisfactorily would require the formulation of a policy that would make the library a great national collection. The Library of Congress might well be taken as a model. While nominally the legislative library of the United States, it has become its national library. The General Assembly Library should continue to be the library of Parliament and it should expand the legislative reference section on the lines which have proved so successful at Washington. It should then develop as a great national reference library free to all citizens. In this scheme provision should be made for unifying the control of all government libraries such as the Alexander Turnbull Library and the various libraries of the government departments. By this unification much duplication and overlapping in book-buying and binding would be saved and the resources of students would be greatly increased. Arrangements should also be made for incorporating in the General Assembly Library the library of the Royal Society of New Zealand and other scientific and professional libraries in Wellington. In these cases it would be necessary to make provision for members' borrowing privileges to be continued, but in return for this the General Assembly Library would secure for reference purposes the splendid collections of scientific literature which these societies now possess.

In any well designed scheme of a national library system provision would need to be made for a national lending library. The success of the English National Central Library which the British Government now so generously supports, and for which new premises were recently opened by the King, is something which New Zealand should try to emulate. With the ultimate development of a national system of libraries a national lending library will be needed to co-ordinate the work of the local units, and to provide the little used but necessary books which local libraries cannot buy for themselves. This collection might probably be a separate department of the national reference library, and it should be part of the plan of the national library which New Zealand ought to adopt. This question is considered more fully in Part II of the Report.

## ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY

**T**he Alexander Turnbull Library, named after its donor, was presented to the State in 1919. It is a scholarly collection estimated to contain 60,000 volumes and rightly ranks as one of the best libraries of its kind in the world. The books divide themselves into three groups—(1) a general library, (2) English literature, and (3) books relating to the South Seas. The general collection contains many rare and valuable sets, outstanding being a complete set of the Kelmscott Press books and the best collection of bibliographical reference works to be found in the Dominion. The English literature division is strong in two sections—the Milton collection, including Miltoniana, and nineteenth century poets. Here first and early editions embarrass one with their profusion. The South Seas Section of the library contains about half the total, and is especially strong in New Zealand items. Along with the Mitchell Library, Sydney, it ranks as the most important collection of its kind extant. It includes many manuscripts notably of Cook and Marsden, but the Hocken collection at Dunedin is stronger than the Turnbull in this regard. The pamphlet collection of New Zealand items is the most extensive known, and the Maori collection shares with the Mitchell Library and the Auckland Public Library the honours to priority. The collection of prints relating to New Zealand is another valuable feature worthy of note, and it is to be regretted that the space available for displaying them is so limited. A gallery similar to that in the Hocken Library or the Mitchell Library would be of great advantage both to students and the general public interested in historical prints. The whole collection is magnificently bound by the greatest contemporary masters of the craft.

The building, which was specially designed to form a home and private library for its owner, is not suitable for its present purpose as a public library. The rooms are small and inadequate for study purposes, and the bookcases are mostly of wood.

The classification and cataloguing are inadequate. There is hope that the recently appointed assistant librarian, who is at present studying in America under a Carnegie Fellowship, will improve conditions upon his return. Until the collection is thoroughly recatalogued the full use of the rich resources of the library cannot be realized.

For a collection of this nature, a much larger staff is needed. If this library were located in either Great Britain or America it is safe to say that the staff would be at least twice its present size.

Being a State library it should not be separated from the other State library in the capital, for overlapping becomes inevitable and costly. Along with the General Assembly Library it should form the nucleus of the proposed national library.



My lengthy experience has taught me that libraries are the first essential of all studies.

J. MACMILLAN BROWN, M.A., LL.D.

*Chancellor, University of New Zealand.*



## THE LIBRARIES OF THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

The college libraries of New Zealand do not even approach accepted overseas standards. In the leading British and American colleges the library is the heart of the institution and its influence is felt in every department, while in New Zealand the libraries appear to be mere annexes to the colleges. Their status is low and their influence on college life and thought is unimportant. The division of the University of New Zealand into constituent colleges, situated in widely separated cities accounts partly for the weakness of the individual libraries. It also causes duplication, part of which might be eliminated by careful co-operation in book selection and in effecting inter-library loans. The college librarians should be enabled to meet occasionally, preferably at the conferences of the Libraries Association, to discuss projects of mutual interest and formulate policy especially on matters relating to book selection and purchase.

The book collections are much too small to support effective undergraduate instruction, and they offer little or nothing to advanced students and faculty members. Bibliographical aids are few, and even the cataloguing of the collections betrays generally the lack of training in present or former staff members.

A display of selected travel, essays, and drama at Otago University library constituted the only attempt, which was observed, to interest the students in general reading. It is also at Otago that the greatest effort is made to acquaint freshmen with the resources of the library.

A staff of three, including the librarian, is the largest one found; at Canterbury the librarian has only student help.

Financial difficulties do not account for all the shortcomings of these libraries. The system of dividing the book fund more or less equally among professors without reference to their book needs is indefensible. The insistence of professors in maintaining separate departmental libraries results in a scattering of small collections which are usually entirely without supervision and are even locked away from student use much of the time. With professors purchasing most of the books, the librarian has had little authority and the position has become little more than a clerkship, except at Victoria College, Wellington.

To encourage the correction of these faults and to help in the development of New Zealand's college libraries, the Carnegie Corporation, in 1931, offered each of the four colleges grants of \$5,000 per annum for three years. Before giving the grants the Corporation stated: "To secure the ends desired and to prevent misunderstandings, the university colleges receiving grants should assure the Corporation on the following points:



1. The physical equipment of the library is such that the new books will receive proper care and be made accessible to students.
2. The college librarian has been appointed and has been given administrative power covering the entire library organization, and is responsible directly to the administrative head of the college. He has received adequate recognition in the academic community with respect to salary scales, standards of advancement, security of tenure, etc. He is considered a member of the educational staff of the college.
3. The grants will be expended solely for the purchase of books and current periodicals for general undergraduate reading in the fields of the arts and sciences (liberal arts) together with catalogue cards for these purchases and not for research material, special collections, subscription sets, completion of files of periodicals or of textbooks either singly or in duplicate. The books purchased are to round out the library as part of the institution rather than to meet the desires of individual departments or professors. Under no circumstances is the grant to be divided equally between departments or professors.
4. The grants are intended to supplement, not to replace either wholly or in part, the normal annual allocations by the college for the purchase of books and periodicals and should be accepted with this understanding."

In order that the college libraries might be developed in accordance with modern overseas practice, the Carnegie Corporation also established fellowships under which each university college was enabled to send its librarian abroad for training at an accredited library school, and to study the services of leading university libraries.

Victoria College is receiving the grant and is making excellent progress in filling the most obvious gaps in its book collection. It is by far the best of the college libraries. The librarian is a man who combines scholarly attainments with organizing skill. He recently studied library science in the United States. His authority is fully recognized and there are no administrative difficulties. The library quarters are small, but plans for enlargement are being made. With only 29,000 volumes, the need for growth is obvious.

Auckland University College library is housed in a large and attractive wing of the main building. It has not yet qualified for the Carnegie Corporation grant because of administrative difficulties. The librarian is in charge of technical processes, but although she has had library training in the United States she has not been given the authority or status which the position should carry. The book fund is allocated by assigning a certain number of units to each department, the number of units determining its share of the fund. This system is better than that of equal distribution but leaves much room for improvement. The book stock numbers about 28,000

volumes including a large number of departmental libraries over which there is little or no supervision and which have poor lending systems. Auckland College's first need is a thorough reorganization and the appointment of additional staff. The librarian must be given a relatively free hand and the support of the administration, as at Victoria College.

The Canterbury College library building is a tiny architectural gem and an impossible library. As there is no way of enlarging the building it must be replaced before adequate facilities can be provided. The book collection is only roughly classified and is not fully catalogued. No one knows exactly how many volumes there are, but the number is estimated at 17,000 to 20,000, including a considerable number of departmental libraries, which should be transferred to the central collection as soon as space is available. The book fund is still divided fairly evenly among the professors, and the librarian has little authority. Canterbury has not yet fully qualified for the Carnegie Corporation grant. Its chief hope appears to lie in a far-seeing rector and an enthusiastic young librarian who has just had training in the United States.

The library of Otago University shows evidence of having recently received more interest and support from the administration. Cataloguing has been revised and brought up-to-date, and additional space secured for book storage. Adequate facilities can never be provided, however, without radical changes.

The main library seats only fifty readers and is used chiefly by students from the liberal arts faculty. It contains 16,000 volumes and there are 4,000 additional books scattered among nine departmental libraries. The departmental collections are under student supervision at best, and should be brought together when space is available.

There is a staff of two. The librarian does not have faculty rating.

The Medical Library is located in the Medical School which occupies a block of buildings on another site. Time did not permit a visit.

The Hocken Library, housed in a portion of the University Museum building, is a notable collection of New Zealand literature, ranking with similar collections in Auckland, Wellington, and Sydney, N.S.W. The Library is named after its donor, the late T. M. Hocken, compiler of the standard "Bibliography of the Literature Relating to New Zealand." The manuscript journals and letters of Samuel Marsden and other pioneers are particularly valuable to students. The entire collection should be expertly catalogued and calendared to become of greater service to research workers. When a new university library building is erected, the Hocken collection should be housed in it.

Otago needs everything—more books, space and personnel. The most promising element in the situation is the realization of the administration that changes must be made.

## THE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

Also operating as constituent parts of the University of New Zealand are the two agricultural colleges, the Massey College at Palmerston North and Lincoln in the South Island.

Considering its size and limited scope, the library at Palmerston North is far ahead of any of the university colleges in the relative adequacy of its library facilities. The library is splendidly housed and contains an excellent collection of books and periodicals dealing with agriculture. It is unfortunate that important periodical sets have been discontinued during the depression as it will be difficult and expensive to fill the gaps later.

On the technical side the situation is not so happy. Classification is too broad for a special library and cataloguing is inadequate. The librarian is untrained and only accuracy and good housekeeping are demanded of her. Better technical administration should be secured before the collection grows much larger.

There is an almost complete absence of books for general cultural and recreational reading. A small but comprehensive collection for browsing might well be added.

Weather conditions prevented a visit to Lincoln.



## SPECIAL LIBRARIES

It could scarcely be expected that a country with so small a population as New Zealand would possess many special libraries. The principal ones, apart from the special collections at the various public libraries (e.g. the New Zealand sections at Dunedin and Auckland, the commercial section at Wellington and the music division at Auckland), are associated with the professions. The various theological colleges, the branches of the British Medical Association, the legal profession and other professional bodies have their own libraries, and some of them are of considerable size and importance. Others are quite insignificant and have not even a permanent location.

Science is fairly well represented in the library belonging to the Royal Society of New Zealand at Wellington. Here are extensive collections of scientific periodicals and transactions of learned societies from every part of the world. The funds of the Society are extremely meagre and for library purposes are totally inadequate. The Society cannot afford a building of its own and its library is housed by courtesy in Victoria College. Means for binding the valuable sets of periodicals do not exist, the quarters are hopelessly inadequate and the staff is too small and insufficiently trained to do the necessary work. Proposals have been made to transfer the library to the new Dominion Museum when the new building is completed, but except for better house-room the library would be no better off than it is at present. No better financial provision will be available for carrying out the great arrears of binding or for classifying and cataloguing the collection.

A much better solution is that advocated in another section of this Report of amalgamating this library and others with the General Assembly Library to form part of a national library. This proposal would provide a permanent home for the collection and ensure its proper care and cataloguing, making its value enormously greater. The borrowing privileges of the Society's members could be continued as at present, and for reference purposes the collection would offer invaluable resources to students at large.

The Royal Society has a number of incorporated branches located in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Nelson, Napier and other places. Each has its own library but they vary in size and importance. The Auckland Institute has an extensive collection housed in a well-planned hall and cared for by a librarian. It is in course of reclassification on the Library of Congress system and is catalogued. Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch also have fairly large collections, but the Napier

Society has found it convenient to place its collection in the local public library and the public has the reference use of the books, members only having the right of borrowing. This is a practical demonstration of co-operation on a small scale which could well be followed by the parent organization.

There are a number of professional societies, such as the New Zealand Society of Engineers and the New Zealand Institute of Surveyors, which have libraries, but in most instances they are small in size and local in outlook.

History collections dealing with New Zealand and the islands of the Pacific form the next most important group of special libraries. Brief mention has already been made of the New Zealand collections in the public libraries at Auckland and Dunedin, and elsewhere in this Report reference has been made to the valuable sections dealing with New Zealand history and affairs belonging to the General Assembly Library, the Alexander Turnbull Library (New Zealand history and the Pacific) and the Hocken Library, Dunedin. The Library of the Polynesian Society should also be mentioned, for while grouped among the history collections it has developed on ethnological lines and supplements the history libraries from that angle. It is housed temporarily in Wellington.

Most of the special libraries belonging to the various societies have been established for the exclusive use of their members, except in the case of the incorporated societies which form the Royal Society. These bodies have made their books available to some extent to the public for reference purposes.

In Great Britain societies frequently hand over their collections to public libraries for safe-keeping, cataloguing and for reference use by the public, while reserving borrowing privileges to members. This plan is commended and should be followed more extensively in New Zealand. It solves many problems for a society, such as housing and care of the books, while it makes them available, under satisfactory safe-guards, to a wider range of students.

From the viewpoint of teaching and of study the value of a school library is unquestioned. Such a library serves two purposes, study and recreational reading, and to a modern school it is no less indispensable than a laboratory.

Particularly in the cities, teachers are becoming acquainted with the resources of their local public libraries and are directing the attention of the children to the facilities therein provided. It is pleasing to note that some of our city libraries control the housing and distribution of library books for school use and, in addition, have established special rooms and departments for children. In this manner the public libraries are becoming valuable auxiliaries to the teacher and are establishing in the youthful mind a knowledge and appreciation of their work. At the same time, there is being developed a technical ability and knowledge of library routine which is so necessary if the fullest use is to be made of the facilities offered.

Travel and reading are the two main agencies by which a nation attains culture and breaks the shackles of parochial thought. The average citizen must depend upon the latter and his need for continuous cultural development demands efficient and up-to-date libraries.

HON. ROBERT MASTERS, M.L.C.

*Minister of Education.*





## SCHOOL LIBRARIES

School libraries, as the term is understood in England and the United States, scarcely exist in New Zealand. With one or two exceptions, library facilities in both secondary and technical schools are extremely meagre, and in no case do they reach an approved standard of library service.

In only three or four cases is the stock of books reasonably adequate to the needs of students. The Auckland Grammar School is one of these, and it also possesses a small but attractive library building which provides seating accommodation for about forty students. The library has been placed in the charge of a master who has shown a decided interest in, and enthusiasm for the work, with the result that it has proved successful and is perhaps the best library of its kind in the Dominion. Its collection of 6,000 volumes, one-half of which is non-fiction, includes a good reference section. New editions of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" and the "New English Dictionary" are examples. It is classified according to the Dewey system, has a card catalogue, and uses a card-charging system. Issues for home reading amount to 30,000 volumes a year, and the library is used both for instruction in the use of reference material and for browsing.

The technical schools are perhaps more deficient in library facilities than the secondary schools. One school library which was said to be good, proved on examination to be hopelessly out-of-date and useless as an aid to study.

Most elementary schools have collections of books which only by courtesy can be called libraries, the stocks having been badly selected, poorly housed and in bad physical condition. The exceptions are those in the schools at Wellington, Auckland and Dunedin where the public library authorities have provided classroom libraries, starting with the third standard, in most cases, and continuing into the sixth standard. The co-operation of school and library has resulted in the provision of more suitable books than are to be found in the usual school collections, and their condition is immeasurably better. Unfortunately the greater share of the cost of providing the books and staff has fallen on the libraries' budget. This is hardly fair to the libraries which have such inadequate funds for their ordinary needs.

Under the existing conditions the schools are practically without funds for library purposes, money having to be taken from the small grant for incidental expenses which the Department of Education, the central authority in Wellington, allows boards for this and similar purposes. The consequence is that the schools have to depend almost entirely on their own efforts to provide library facilities. Up to the recent depression local efforts

to provide book collections were subsidized by the Department of Education. This was an incentive which inspired many school committees and masters to form school libraries, but since the withholding of the subsidy library development has practically ceased.

Good library facilities—both reference and recreational—are an essential part of every school. In general education a library bears the same relation to the school as a laboratory does to a science department. Without a library much of the value of the teaching and instruction is lost. For this reason all encouragement should be given to schools to develop suitable libraries. As immediate steps in this direction, the restoration of the subsidy and the extension of co-operative efforts between the schools and public libraries are recommended. The co-operation of libraries and schools should result in a general all-round improvement in the school libraries, for the knowledge of book selection and library method which the librarians possess would be invaluable to the school authorities.

Apart from the purely administrative help which the libraries can give the schools there is scope for more co-operation between the two authorities. Wellington has developed this aspect more fully than any other district. Regular instruction in the use of the library is given at the Central Library to the pupils of all secondary and technical schools in the district. The library has also taken charge of the school supplementary reading system. It houses the collection of books belonging to the Board of Education, selects the titles, does whatever reinforcing of the binding and repairs that may be necessary, and issues the books to the teachers.

Further co-operation on these lines is desirable. A pressing need for all schools is reliable and authoritative graded lists of books suitable for boys and girls from the age of eight to eighteen. The Libraries Association might undertake the preparation of these lists, and the Department of Education could then print and distribute them to every school and library in the Dominion, and also to all organizations which are interested in the welfare of young people. Such lists would be of inestimable value to teachers and parents who desire guidance in selecting reading for children.



If we lag behind in our cultural pursuits, few of our other gains will be of much lasting consequence.

HAWKES BAY HERALD (Napier, N.Z.)

*April 30, 1934*



## WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

**T**he adult education movement in New Zealand is largely sponsored by the Workers' Educational Association, which functions through the four university colleges at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. The cultural side of education is emphasized in its classes and correspondence courses by the study of music, art, and literature, but the practical subjects are also represented in various branches of economics, science, and history, with prominence laid on subjects of special interest to New Zealanders. The class leaders or tutors are authorities in their subjects and include professors and lecturers from the university colleges and other experts. The Association promotes summer schools in addition to its regular classes.

The organization depended originally for its finances on government grants, students' fees, and donations from local governing bodies and the general public. Since the general depression the Association has relied quite largely upon funds furnished by the Carnegie Corporation.

An essential part of the Association's equipment is the library. Each branch has a central collection of books covering the subjects of its classes, chosen largely by the organiser and the various tutors. These books are available free to all members of the Association. Members in various sub-branches may obtain a case of books dealing with the subject being studied and individual members may borrow books by mail. The Canterbury branch operates a bookmobile, or travelling library, which carries book supplies throughout its territory. This is an interesting experiment in rural library service which may provide valuable data in connection with a more general library service to country residents, and the librarian of the Canterbury Public Library has been lending books with this purpose in mind.

The collection of books at the Auckland branch gave evidence of careful selection. This branch owns about 3,800 volumes, the Wellington branch has 2,500, Christchurch 1,633, and Otago about 1,700. In addition to the book collections, each branch owns and circulates hundreds of gramophone records and art prints.

None of the district associations has been able to afford the services of a trained librarian, but Auckland has classified its books according to the Dewey system and has prepared a card catalogue by authors.

It was learned that all sections of the Association are strongly in favour of the establishment of a national central lending library from which books could be obtained that are not available in their own collections. The want of such a library is felt to be a severe handicap to the serious student.



Judging by many inquiries, it appears that the Association is doing a useful community service, and is deserving of support from the general and local governments as well as from the public.

There is only slight co-operation with the public libraries, mainly due to the subscription basis which exists in most of them. The public libraries have indicated their desire to work with the Association, and in matters of technical advice they have given willing assistance, but in book service they can do little. This is unfortunate, for many of the public libraries have the means of being serviceable to no small degree because of their stronger reserves of books, especially bound sets of periodicals which the Association's collections all lack. It is just another example of the way in which the subscription basis acts as a barrier to library development.

## READING FOR THE BLIND

The number of blind people in New Zealand is fortunately relatively small, being just over 900 persons. There is only one institution in the Dominion, the Jubilee Institute for the Blind, at Auckland, which cares for these people, and here a library for the blind is maintained, free of all charge. The number of volumes contained in the library is 5,834, comprising 4,110 in Braille and 1,724 in Moon type. Twenty-one periodicals are also received regularly. The library is conducted by a librarian and one assistant both of whom are totally blind. Books are loaned direct from headquarters to Auckland residents, while regular consignments are supplied to the public libraries at Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin for the benefit of the blind in these cities. Individuals in other parts of the country have their supplies mailed to them direct, no postage being charged by the Government.

Until 1929-30 the annual additions were satisfactory. In that year a total of 942 volumes were added. Since then the additions have decreased and in 1933-34 only 124 volumes were procured. Despite this the issues have continued to improve year by year, and in the last five years they show an increase of fifty per cent.

The library is financed from the Institute's general funds with the addition of contributions from the public libraries of Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin which make an annual grant of £15, £10 and £10 respectively. Until 1931 the Wellington Public Library contributed £10 annually, but this has been discontinued. The Institute still supplies the Wellington Public Library with books, and it is to be hoped that Wellington will soon find itself in a position to reinstate the annual grant which means so much to the Institute. The financial position of the Institute at the end of 1933 showed a deficiency of £2,088 and this resulted in the small number of additions made to the library in that year.

The selection of books reflects much credit on the director and the library staff, and good use appears to be made of the books. The management of the library is efficient and the method of reaching patrons is satisfactory and effective. Unfortunately the accommodation for the library is insufficient, being confined to a small room with high bookshelves entailing the use of ladders which have been the cause of accidents to the staff. There is practically no provision for reading within the library. In addition to increased accommodation there is need for a larger and wider selection of reading material, and for a supplementary catalogue. These desiderata could be secured if a small endowment fund for the library were available. The library would then be free of the fluctuations which are inseparable from a general fund.





. . . the whole library system of the Dominion evidently would benefit from an overhaul, chiefly in the direction of the development of a system of co-operation between the main libraries and the libraries in smaller towns and those serving country districts. The desideratum is that the stocks of the libraries should be grouped around the central institutions and made available through them to all members of the associated libraries on request.

OTAGO DAILY TIMES (Dunedin)

*May 11, 1934*

In the United States communities generally accept the idea that libraries should be supported by rates and give free facilities to the public, and a great deal has been done through travelling libraries to serve the needs of the country. Libraries are powerful instruments of adult education, and in the United States they are generously fostered.

SOUTHLAND TIMES (Invercargill)

*May 9, 1934*



## PART TWO

### PLAN FOR A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF LIBRARIES

**I**n formulating a plan of library development for New Zealand the first essential is to agree upon the primary function of libraries. Informed opinion would accept the view that their chief function is educational, but this is both too general and too vague. To obtain a better idea of the library's place in a modern community let us consider education in its more generally accepted meaning, namely that which is imparted in organized classes through teaching.

The main purpose of schools and colleges is to teach the young to read and think, and to prepare them for the duties of life and living. School and college only begin education; they do not complete it. At the school-leaving age the average person has finished only one-fourth of a normal life, and he still has much to learn if he is to gain a livelihood and make something of his life. If no provision is made for his after-school education, the vast sums of money which have been spent to provide school facilities will be largely wasted, for what is learned at school is soon forgotten unless means are provided for augmenting and intensifying that knowledge.

To meet the needs of post-school education should be the main purpose of libraries in general, and of public libraries in particular. If this view of the modern public library is accepted in New Zealand, as it has been in other progressive countries, but especially in Great Britain and the United States, a new conception of the function of libraries will have to be taken, for as has been shown in this Report only a few communities have realized the educational value of libraries.

Looked at from this angle libraries are of vital importance to the community, and deserve much more consideration than is now given to them. There is a great gap in the education system of any country which does not provide a means for cultural development after school days are over, and experience elsewhere has shown that the public library is the best means of bridging it.

The public library which understands its functions properly, however, does not limit its services to providing educational or cultural opportunities. It operates on a threefold basis—cultural, vocational, and recreational, and it meets the needs of the whole community, from the youngest to the oldest. It works in the interests of all—students, workers, business men of all kinds, and provides recreational reading for everyone. It co-operates with every agency which needs its help, and its usefulness is being appreciated more and more in progressive communities. In England, for instance,



many local authorities increased expenditure on their libraries during recent years when other expenditures were being reduced. Such communities realize that cultural improvement means good citizenship and that libraries are promoting this in a large degree. They have also come to comprehend that vocational education is of great importance to the economic welfare of the state and that libraries can help in providing manual workers and business men with useful books and information which materially assist them in their daily work. Similarly it has been recognised that the recreational opportunities which libraries offer are of importance, and by providing people with the best books in general literature they are conferring a boon on all citizens.

It may not be inappropriate to discuss here the place which fiction should take in the stock of a public library. Novels, good novels, both old and new, should find a place in every public library, *but only in proportion to other classes of books*. They should not, as is too often the case at present, usurp the place of all other departments of literature and leave no funds for providing the cultural and vocational reading which is of such value to the community. A moderate supply of carefully selected fiction is properly included, but beyond these limits the public library should not attempt to go.

Developed along these lines, public libraries in New Zealand would command respect and would fulfil a useful community service as great as, and complementary to, the general education provided in state schools. For this reason they should be entirely free in all services, including the lending departments which should in time become the most important section of the library. Reference departments should provide those books which are constantly referred to, but are not wanted for reading throughout. All books which ordinarily are meant for reading at leisure or for study should be placed in the lending department. Only large city libraries will need to provide extensive reference collections. Smaller places will find that the standard reference books will meet most of the demands which are made, but these books should be up-to-date and the best that are procurable.

The need for libraries was never greater than it is to-day. Books are the vehicles of thought and practice, and must be used by everyone who wishes to keep up with the affairs of the world. They are expensive and few individuals have the means of providing them for themselves; yet their value to the community is such that, like schools, they should be freely at the service of all in the interest of better citizenship.

Having discussed the function of libraries it is now necessary to consider how they should be organized to meet the needs of the various types of communities which they should serve, for it is obvious that the kind of library which a large city requires would not be possible in a small town.

Before doing so let us glance for a moment at existing library conditions. One's first impression is that the libraries of New Zealand have only local significance. No borough, town or village has any connection with its neighbour; co-operation does not obtain anywhere. The next impression is that every library, no matter how small, is attempting to do the impossible by trying to develop on the same lines as the large city libraries. Even if the funds of such libraries were increased ten-fold they could not do so, and it is a mistake to try. What is needed is a plan along which the various types of libraries should develop.

A sharp distinction between large and small communities must be made in planning library development. In the city it is possible to raise an adequate library fund from a reasonable rate levy; the town, however, contains so little taxable property that even an unreasonably high rate does not bring an adequate return. The city is thus able to maintain an independent library, while the town cannot do so.

#### URBAN LIBRARIES

In England it is only cities of 20,000 or more inhabitants which are encouraged to operate municipal libraries. It is apparent, however, that the determining factor is not the size of the community, but its ability to raise sufficient funds. A city library should be suitably housed, adequately stocked with the various types of books which are needed to accomplish its three-fold mission, and administered by trained personnel. In the United States, a library fund of four shillings per caput per year is the accepted standard for reasonably adequate library service in a city of 12,000 or more inhabitants. The largest amount being spent by any New Zealand library is now about two shillings and six pence per caput.

Conditions in New Zealand indicate that 12,000 inhabitants might well be taken as the minimum size of a city which can raise sufficient funds to operate an independent library. In this group are the four main centres of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, and the ten secondary cities, Wanganui, Invercargill, Palmerston North, Napier, Timaru, New Plymouth, Hamilton, Hastings, Gisborne and Nelson. Any smaller town which is willing to tax itself heroically, or which has an unusual amount of rateable property, or a library endowment should be welcomed in this group.

Means should be found to form unified library districts which would include the metropolitan areas of the larger cities. In this way the small adjoining boroughs would reap the advantages of becoming part of a larger and more highly organized city system.

#### RURAL LIBRARIES

The problem of library service for the small town or rural district remained unsolved until a larger unit of organization and financing was



adopted. In Great Britain and several states of the United States, particularly California, the county has been successfully substituted for the town as the unit for library service.

The counties of New Zealand are so small in population and resources that it is not practicable to follow the English plan of organizing county libraries. Several adjacent counties might join together, however, to form a library district which would contain sufficient resources to finance a library system. Considering all of the conditions peculiar to New Zealand, this appears to be the best solution.

Except that each library district would contain more than one county, the English pattern can be followed quite closely.

The combining of all resources within a given area is the basic element of the county or district library. Instead of each small community being limited to the meagre facilities which it can provide for itself, it contributes toward the maintenance of a much larger system and shares in its benefits.

In operation, the county or district library is similar to a large city system with a central library and many branches. Headquarters are established in a centrally located town where offices and a store-room can be obtained. Books for the entire system are purchased and prepared for use at headquarters. In suitable quantities, they are then sent from one community to another. Instead of the small town buying a few books of its own, as at present, it receives frequent consignments from headquarters which are passed on to the next town when they have been read. As the county or district system is developed its headquarters library will accumulate a depository collection of the more unusual books which can be borrowed on demand by any town. A fully trained personnel at its headquarters is one of the chief advantages which comes with the district plan. No small town can afford to hire a trained librarian, but a district can do so. The librarian would make regular tours through the district, acting as advisor to local library committees and giving help to the untrained librarians of the small towns.

A variety of agencies are used as the local outlets for the district system. Wherever a town library exists it would naturally be continued as the local branch. Community centres, schools, welfare clubs and other organizations can be utilized where there is no library. Where settlements are scattered, books can be sent by mail and in time a bookmobile or travelling library van might be acquired.

The proposal to form a library district brings the difficulties of levying rates through more than one county, and of devising means of making the governing board properly representative. The difficulties are not insuperable, however, and in the state hospitals service there is even a precedent to follow.



A difficulty of another nature is found in those larger towns which have provided themselves with library buildings and have attempted, seldom with success, to maintain library service. These communities may fear that their local identity will be lost in a larger scheme. This fear is quite groundless as the local library boards may retain full control of the actual operation of their libraries. The boards are, however, given greatly increased facilities with which to work under the district plan. Local initiative and endeavour should always be encouraged, and in organizing districts full freedom should be given to existing libraries to decide whether to join or not. In England this freedom was given, but libraries which hesitated to join soon saw the advantages of the larger organization. Even if some libraries remain independent, they can contract with the district authorities to supply a larger and better selection of books at a cheaper rate than they can secure for themselves.

With a district system adequately financed and fully developed, every individual whether located in a small borough, a town, or on a station or camp would be in constant touch with a good book supply. The system would greatly strengthen the small library even if it chose to remain independent, for it could not overlook the advantages to be gained from participating in the book supply which the district scheme would offer. A steady supply of books is the crying need of all small libraries and this need can be cheaply and satisfactorily met through the district system. The small libraries which have struggled for years to achieve even passable results without success would function efficiently. By the practical help which the scheme would bring about the small libraries would become active living things, co-operating with each other, through the headquarters organization, in the same way as branch libraries of the large city library systems. The stagnation and rot which has infested the country libraries of the Dominion would be cured and an era of progress would begin.

Anticipating a natural question as to the cost of operating a library district, a budget is submitted for a rural service to provide for a population of 50,000 persons, on a five years' plan. In this estimate every necessary expenditure has been taken into consideration, except that for local distribution. It is taken for granted that existing public libraries would undertake to see that the books are distributed, and that in smaller communities one of the many welfare institutes would provide the same facilities without any cost to the central organization. The book provision is based on the standard British requirement of thirty volumes to every 100 persons. It also provides for a book truck which would be of enormous value to small isolated communities and individuals. The total cost in the fifth year, when the service would be normal, represents a fraction over a shilling a head of the population annually, a small amount for the service it would provide. Compared with an urban system this is a small outlay, as it need

not include a costly building and a large staff. The Dunedin Public Library which serves a population of 69,400 people costs approximately £4,700, or roughly one shilling and five pence per head of the population.

*Budget for a Rural Library System Serving a Population of 50,000*

	1st year £	2nd year £	3rd year £	4th year £	5th year £
Books	1,000	700	700	700	700
Librarian's salary	350	350	375	375	400
Assistant librarian's salary	175	175	200	200	225
Junior assistant's salary	100	100	125	125	150
Chauffeur	208	208	208	208	208
Binding	—	50	50	100	100
Rental of premises, lighting, cleaning, &c.	150	150	150	150	150
Furniture and equipment	250	150	100	50	50
Stationery, printing, postage, telephone, freight, &c.	100	100	125	125	125
Travelling allowance	150	150	150	150	150
Book truck	400	—	—	—	—
Car operation	175	175	175	175	175
Contingency	42	92	92	92	97
	<u>3,100</u>	<u>2,400</u>	<u>2,450</u>	<u>2,450</u>	<u>2,530</u>

### REGIONAL GROUPING

So far only public libraries in cities and country areas have been considered, but these types of libraries do not make up a national system—the ideal for which everyone interested in library development is seeking. Co-operation and inter-lending among urban systems and between urban systems and rural systems should be the rule throughout the country, and would help toward realizing the ideal. Valuable as properly organized public libraries are, however, they cannot be expected always to meet the demands made upon them. The public library maintains a collection based upon general use and cannot purchase the highly specialized and perhaps infrequently used material such as is found in the libraries of the university colleges, the Royal Society, or the General Assembly Library. Yet there are occasions when the university professor or student needs a book which a public library may have, or a public library borrower may need access to material in a university collection or in a library of the Royal Society. To make the resources of the one available to the other should be the objective of every library, and a scheme of inter-library lending should be arranged between all libraries in certain areas, and throughout the Dominion.



For this purpose libraries should be formed into regional groups with a designated library serving as headquarters through which inter-lending could be transacted both within the regional area and with the headquarters of other regions. The main public library of a region will generally be found to be the most suitable library to act as the regional headquarters.

To accomplish this scheme satisfactorily a national central (lending) library, on the lines of the National Central Library, London, is necessary. This should contain those books of special worth and value which students require only occasionally and which it would be uneconomical for more than one library in the country to possess. Such books should be available to all students when necessary, no matter where they may reside. A national lending library is a necessity for New Zealand and it should form a part of the proposed national library which is described later. The national central (lending) library would be the apex of a national system of lending libraries, co-ordinating the work of all and forming a clearing-house of bibliographical information for all students and research workers of the country.

#### A NATIONAL LIBRARY

To complete the national system a national library is indispensable. Local libraries have a definite function within their own communities, but that function is entirely distinct from that of a national library. Financial limitations compel the urban public library to confine itself to the needs of its own people, and this leaves a wide gap which only a national library can fill. Such matters as the care and preservation of national documents, the making of a national bibliography, and the collection of all books, periodicals and newspapers of national importance are the particular province of a national library. If this work of collecting, preserving and recording the nation's printed and manuscript material is not done now it will have to be undertaken sometime in the future at a much greater cost.

In the General Assembly Library the Dominion has a fair start towards a national collection, and being the library of deposit for all books published in New Zealand the Government has tacitly admitted it to the status of the Dominion's national library. All that is now needed is to re-organize the library on national lines. What the compass of the national library should be has already been indicated in Part I of this Report. There it was suggested that the national library should continue its present function as the General Assembly Library, extending that by developing the legislative reference section, and enlarging the department dealing with archives so that research workers and students of New Zealand history could obtain the help which they so greatly need. In addition to these activities it should bring under its control the Alexander Turnbull Library which is at present administered by the Department of Internal Affairs. To have two govern-



ment libraries under different departments is neither efficient nor economical. To strengthen the science sections overtures should be made to the Royal Society of New Zealand and similar scientific societies in Wellington to transfer their collections to the national library, arrangements being made for the societies to retain their borrowing privileges, in return for which the books would be suitably housed and properly catalogued and cared for. To complete its service, provision should be made for a lending department which would correspond to the National Central Library, London.

To function satisfactorily it may be found advisable to place the national library under the control of a board of trustees. This is how the British Museum is operated and the Dominion Museum has recently adopted the same plan. If this suggestion is accepted the following officials might be considered for membership of the board—(1) the Speaker of the Legislative Council, (2) the Speaker of the House of Representatives, (3) the Minister of Education, (4) the Chancellor of the University of New Zealand, (5) the President of the Royal Society of New Zealand, (6) the President of the Historical Society of New Zealand (when formed), (7) a professional representative of the Libraries Association of New Zealand, and (8) a member to be appointed by the Governor-General.

#### SUBSIDY FOR COUNTRY LIBRARIES

Until such time as the rural library scheme which has been suggested in this Section becomes established it is strongly recommended that the subsidy to small libraries be reinstated at the earliest possible moment. In this survey it was found that all the country libraries had been severely affected by its withdrawal, and many had ceased to function altogether. It is suggested, however, that the plan of subsidizing be changed, and, instead of a monetary grant being given to individual libraries, books to the value of the grant be supplied and a system of exchange inaugurated. The best way to carry out this proposal is to set up a sub-department of the General Assembly Library which would purchase the books and send them to the various country libraries. A proposed scheme has been prepared and is printed in the *Proceedings* of the Libraries Association of New Zealand, 1930. The plan in force in South Australia is also an excellent one.

#### LEGISLATION

To make possible the plan recommended in the foregoing sections will require fresh legislation. A revision of the law relating to libraries is obviously needed if New Zealand desires to bring its library system into line with the best modern practice. When this revision is undertaken consideration should be given to the following matters. (1) Abolition of the

STATISTICS OF THE PRINCIPAL  
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

# STATISTICS OF THE PRIN

Library	Popu- lation	Book stock	Borrow- ers or Sub- scribers	Volumes Circulated	INCOME			
					Rates or Grants	Subscrip- tions and Fees	Other Sources	Total
Auckland	106,900	171,321	7,021 S 6,412 F	692,563	£ 8,161	£ 3,485	£ 2,909	£ 14,555
Christchurch	120,000	54,147	2,500 S 2,000 F	252,039	—	2,197	639	2,836
Dunedin	69,400	48,522	9,813 F	387,745	4,670	—	150	4,820
Gisborne	21,700	10,882	677 S	64,324	125	579	348	1,052
Hamilton	16,000	23,889	1,515 S	167,768	700	1,000	145	1,845
Hastings	12,250	5,510	1,140 S	No record	716	330	12	1,058
Invercargill	25,000	33,500	2,081 S	105,315	776	1,123	2,045	3,944
Napier	19,450	11,500	400 S	No record	150	137	—	?
Nelson	12,850	11,000	503 S	No record	300	521	223	1,044
New Plymouth	17,000	20,461	1,356 S	146,583	750	1,074	—	1,824
Palmerston N.	23,500	16,500	1,197 S	111,263	997	637	95	1,729
Timaru	18,750	21,575	6,209 F	215,009	1,722	23	139	1,884
Wanganui	27,650	20,355	1,725 S	140,787	741	880	—	1,621
Wellington	112,700	114,638	7,836 S 7,900 F	659,269	5,761	3,826	349	9,936

S. signifies subscribers. F. signifies free borrowers.



rate limitation, so as to allow libraries to develop to meet the needs of their communities. In effect all that is asked is that the people be allowed to decide for themselves what expenditure they wish to make for the upkeep of their own library. England's experience in granting freedom in this way should assure any doubters of the wisdom of this proposal, for there has been no extravagance in library expenditure since the new legislation was passed fifteen years ago. (2) The institution of completely free libraries, including all lending sections. In this connection it is only necessary to point out how inimical to progress the subscription basis has been in New Zealand. The cultural and vocational functions have been subordinated to, and sometimes completely submerged by the purely recreational, which has often not risen above the provision of light, ephemeral reading. In the interests of children and youths alone this change would be completely justifiable. (3) Controlling authority. In the light of modern practice and its application to New Zealand conditions careful thought should be given to the controlling authority in both urban and rural districts. In the former permission should be given to large metropolitan areas to form a single unit for reasons of economy and efficiency. It is not fair to municipalities which provide good library service for the community at large to have adjacent districts benefitting thereby without contributing to the cost. For rural library service even more care and study is required, for it has been shown that the single county unit is insufficiently populated to provide the necessary funds to maintain a satisfactory service. It is quite beyond the scope of the present Report to do more than point to the need. The solution has been indicated. The question of a suitable grouping of counties merits special and thorough investigation. This is a matter which should legitimately be left to the Libraries Association or a qualified person to be appointed by the Government. Another aspect of the rural libraries worthy of further investigation is that of finance. Under the best conditions counties have limited financial resources. Because of the general educational and cultural value of libraries, the Dominion Government should bear some of the cost of providing rural library services, in the same way as it does for hospital services and general local administration in scattered areas. Local control of library districts should, however, be recommended and encouraged because local interest is essential to the success of libraries. (4) If considered necessary, legislative authority should be given to the regional grouping indicated in this section. (5) The national library should receive special consideration on the lines suggested, but this legislation may more suitably be framed independently of the general library legislation recommended here.



## RECAPITULATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Function of libraries.* More consideration should be given to the threefold function of libraries, namely the cultural, vocational and recreational. The value of libraries in providing opportunities for continuing education after school days are over should be constantly kept before the public. Self-development is a social necessity in a modern democratic community and good books are of the utmost importance in attaining it. Vocational guidance is equally important and to meet this need an adequate supply of books on agricultural, technological, industrial and commercial subjects is required. Books of this nature are expensive and beyond the means of the average person, and for this reason alone they should be provided as a public necessity for the use of all citizens. The recreational value of reading is generally recognized, but with the increasing importance of providing for the useful employment of leisure, greater consideration should be given to this aspect of library activity. In all new plans of library development fuller attention should be given to the children, and instruction in the use of libraries should be given regularly to the senior pupils of all schools. Co-operation with the school authorities should be developed to the fullest possible degree.

2. *Free libraries.* It should be the objective of all library authorities to make public libraries free in all departments, including the lending divisions, starting with a free service to children and gradually extending it to every citizen. It has been repeatedly emphasized how inimical to the proper development of libraries in New Zealand the subscription plan has been. The consequence is that the public libraries do not fulfil the purpose for which they were originally founded, which was to provide every person with the means of self-development. The view too generally accepted that public libraries are merely purveyors of current ephemeral reading matter must be replaced with the idea that they are the community storehouses of knowledge and culture, not in the sense of compulsory educational institutions but as places where people may obtain help, self instruction, or recreation whenever they require it. In making the libraries free it should of course be understood that only ratepayers and residents of a district are entitled to free service. People who do not contribute either directly as ratepayers or indirectly as residents to the district's municipal funds are not entitled to free borrowing facilities. If non-ratepayers or non-residents wish to borrow books from a public library they must be prepared to pay for the privilege.

3. *Library rate.* The penny in the pound limitation should be eliminated, as in England, or the rate limit should be advanced to threepence,



as in Scottish law. The penny rate has proved itself totally insufficient to maintain a satisfactory service. It is folly to allow libraries to be established and then prohibit them from raising sufficient funds to function satisfactorily. Abolishing the rate limit does no more than give communities freedom to decide for themselves what sum they shall spend on the upkeep of their own libraries. No other department of municipal activity is restricted in this way, and there is no reason why libraries should be singled out for such treatment. England's experience demonstrates that no extravagance has followed the elimination of the rate restriction. With the limited financial resources which New Zealand libraries now possess, only the most elementary service can be provided. Many of them can offer no more than a lending section and a reading room poorly stocked with books and periodicals. Children's rooms and reference departments are necessities, and until these departments are established it cannot be stated that a community is providing its citizens with a properly equipped public library. It is to be hoped that this long overdue reform in library legislation in New Zealand will soon be accomplished.

4. *Subsidy for country libraries.* Pending the inauguration of the type of rural libraries which is recommended in this Report, the restoration of the £3,000 subsidy to country libraries is strongly urged. The subsidy was the main source of book supply to the small libraries, and its withdrawal has meant the extinction of many of them. When the subsidy is restored it is recommended that a new plan for its disbursement be adopted. Instead of giving small sums to individual libraries, the whole amount should be allocated to a sub-department of the General Assembly Library, for the purchase of books. Each library qualified to receive the subsidy would then obtain a supply of well-chosen books bought more cheaply than an individual library could buy them for itself. In addition to this a system of exchanging books should be inaugurated, which would result in the stocks of the country libraries being refreshed three or four times a year instead of becoming a dead weight after they have been read. In the selection of books care should be taken to provide works which would meet the needs of the people both from the practical and recreational standpoints, and the selection should embrace books suitable for the children. This plan is successfully operated in South Australia.

5. *Urban and rural libraries.* The plan of development for urban and rural libraries, as outlined, is also strongly recommended, so that the public libraries of the country may grow into useful institutions, each fulfilling its requisite function. The area of the metropolitan systems should be enlarged in order that adjacent local bodies can reap the advantages to be gained from alliance with more fully organized systems. There is reason for believing that the urban libraries will improve considerably in the immediate future as they conform to a more enlightened view of their func-

tions as cultural institutions. The rural libraries present the most difficult and pressing problem of the day in the library field, and careful and sympathetic handling of the situation is demanded. The scheme which has been submitted for approval and adoption is believed to be the best possible for the Dominion, and although there are difficulties to be overcome in applying it none of these are insurmountable if the will to achieve is evident.

6. *Regional grouping of libraries.* The grouping of libraries into regional systems is greatly to be desired. The regional systems would consist of all public libraries, both urban and rural, along with other libraries such as the university college libraries and the libraries of branches of the Royal Society of New Zealand, within areas to be defined, probably nine or ten in number. These libraries would voluntarily undertake the inter-lending of books through a designated regional headquarters. Voluntary inter-lending between regional systems should also be established, the lending to be arranged through the media of the various regional headquarters libraries. To unify and complete the system of inter-loan facilities a national central lending library on the model of the British National Central Library, London, is a desideratum and should be the consummation of the national system of libraries. It should be the clearing-house for the entire library system of the country and the chief source of all bibliographical information. The national central lending library should form a department of the national library of New Zealand when it is brought into being.

7. *National library for Dominion.* The creation of a national library for New Zealand should be undertaken without further delay. The General Assembly Library is the natural focal point of a national library because of its copyright privileges, and because its whole history has shown a trend towards becoming a national institution. It could well follow the precedent of the Library of Congress, Washington, which while retaining the legislative appellation and function has become the national library of the United States. It should develop as a national reference library, but continue and expand its legislative functions. As the national library it should bring under its control the Alexander Turnbull Library which is now administered by the Department of Internal Affairs. Divided control of any group of institutions of the same kind is both uneconomical and unwise. It should also arrange to take over the science library of the Royal Society of New Zealand, allowing members of the Society to retain their borrowing privileges. The Library of Congress, in accepting the Library of the Smithsonian Institution, has shown that this type of co-operation works satisfactorily for all parties. As suggested in the previous paragraph a national circulating library should be provided in association with the national library. For the national library to develop satisfactorily it may be found



advisable to free it from political control as the Dominion Museum and Art Gallery has recently been freed, but the legislature should be strongly represented on the board.

8. *Professional training and remuneration.* Means must be devised to raise the general and professional educational standards of librarians and assistant librarians. It is recommended that for all urban public library systems and all university college libraries the matriculation examination of the University of New Zealand, or its equivalent, should be the minimum required for appointment to a library position. In addition every encouragement should be given to young library assistants (1) to acquire a university degree, and (2) to study for the professional examinations of the Library Association (London), or to take a course in librarianship at the Library School of the University of London or one of the American universities. Salary increases and advancement in position should be made dependent upon satisfactory progress towards fuller training. As soon as the general level of salaries can be raised, only university graduates should be eligible for appointment to professional staffs.

Salary rates which can be paid by country libraries are too low to warrant the type of education and training recommended above. Country librarians must, however, be given at least elementary training in technique and occasional opportunities to bring their problems to experienced librarians. Both needs might be met by the following plans: (a) Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch are natural centres and in each city the public library staffs are competent to give instruction. It is therefore suggested that each city assume the responsibility of offering elementary training to the country librarians within its area. If only one or two applicants appear, they might be given a few weeks training as apprentices. If enough respond, instruction could be given more formally through classroom methods. (b) It would also be helpful if the chief librarians of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch could be relieved of their duties for two weeks each year, in order that they might visit some of the country libraries within their areas. The trip which the writers of this Report made through New Zealand produced convincing evidence that many library boards and librarians are struggling in the dark, and are eager to discuss their problems with experienced librarians.

The cost of these two plans would be quite low. If no local method of financing can be found, the Libraries Association of New Zealand should make application to some foundation for a grant to carry them through an experimental period.

The remuneration of librarians in New Zealand is small in comparison both with other branches of municipal and government undertakings in the Dominion, and with librarians in Great Britain and the United States. The chief librarians of the four main centres, three of whom are trained



men with lengthy experience in Great Britain, deserve greater remuneration for their services than they now receive. Other officers in these libraries should also be paid higher salaries. For the remainder of the staffs, salaries should be increased as members improve their knowledge of their profession by study and examinations.

9. *School libraries.* Efforts should be made to improve the libraries of primary, secondary and technical schools and to establish small permanent collections of reference books of value to pupils and masters. Improved financial provision should be made by the Education Department with this object in view, by increasing the grants or subsidies for the purchase of books and better equipment. More co-operation between library and school authorities is advised.

10. *Libraries Association of New Zealand.* The Executive of the Libraries Association is urged to undertake a programme of work whereby the objects for which it was formed may be more speedily and effectively achieved. The tour of inspection which the writers made through New Zealand has convinced them that there is an urgent need for a strong Libraries Association to stimulate the efforts which are being made towards improving libraries, especially in the secondary cities. Committees are realizing the need for library development, but they do not know what steps they should take to bring about necessary improvements. The first work that the Libraries Association should take in hand is the giving of the necessary guidance to the authorities of small libraries which need and desire such help. So far library endeavour has been only a series of disjointed efforts. A plan to include the following objects should be formulated and put into practice as quickly as possible (1) Education of public opinion as to the place and function of libraries in the community, taking as models the library systems of Great Britain, the United States and other countries in which library service has been developed. The reforms desired will have to emanate from those possessing precise and practical knowledge of library administration; they will not be achieved from the outside. This requires extensive and intensive propaganda among individuals and organizations to bring about the desired results. In this connection it is recommended that systematic use should be made of the press and radio. Conferences, if planned on a sufficiently broad foundation, will also be of considerable value. Co-ordination of libraries with all cultural, educational and social organizations should be the primary aim of annual meetings. (2) Improved legislation must also be obtained. The law relating to libraries needs a thorough revision to allow them to develop along modern lines, especially for the rural communities. (3) Professional education of librarians must be improved and practical ways devised to secure this. (Lines of approach have been indicated in Recommendation 8.) There are not enough opportunities for the employment of trained librarians in

New Zealand to-day to justify the establishment of a library school. As opportunities for employment increase, however, this question should be considered. A degree course under the auspices of the University of New Zealand should be the ultimate goal. (4) A professional library for librarians, especially for those located in the country, is a pressing necessity which the Association should take steps to meet. (5) A library journal or bulletin is also urgently required and should perhaps take precedence over all other matters. If the editorial department were placed in competent hands it could wield a powerful influence in moulding public opinion in favour of library development. It could disseminate news of library progress which would inspire emulation, and by means of practical advice in library method it would raise the standard of library practice throughout the country. The journal should be made the vehicle of advice in book selection, especially for the small country libraries which need this help so greatly.

These are a few suggestions which the Libraries Association should consider. The future will bring others. When the rural library schemes begin to take shape a larger field of practical work will come into being, for the detailed working out of plans will produce problems for which the Association should provide the solutions.

To realize any of the suggestions outlined above will demand considerable financial expenditure, and ways and means of obtaining money to carry them out will need to be considered. This is indeed the most vital problem of all, and upon it the Association should concentrate its immediate attention.

# CIPAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES

EXPENDITURE				Staff	REMARKS
Books & Periodicals	Salaries	Main-tenance	Total		
£ 3,305	£ 6,246	£ 5,002	£ 14,553	36	System of Central Library and nine branch libraries including Leys Institute, an endowed institution.
1,022	1,155	581	2,758	9	Library is controlled by Canterbury University College. There are a number of independent suburban libraries, supported partly by City Council grants and subscribers' fees of which no account is taken here.
1,400	1,896	1,434	4,730	11	Library is entirely free including lending departments.
206	210	579	995	3	
785	641	307	1,733	5	There are two libraries, one at Frankton Junction which is now part of Hamilton Borough.
365	312	381	1,058	2	Library was destroyed in earthquake, 1931.
680	1,009	2,255	3,944	5	
177	185	130	492	1	
369	230	373	972	2	
647	828	351	1,826	5	
515	552	662	1,729	4	
504	820	560	1,884	5	Library is entirely free including lending departments.
560	674	387	1,621	5	
2,404	3,342	4,190	9,936	26	System of Central Library and six branches.



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